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A
SON OF EARTH

OTHER BOOKS BY WILLIAM ELLERY LEONARD

P O E T R Y

Two Lives
Tutankhamen and After
The Lynching Bee
The Vaunt of Man
Sonnets and Poems
Poems 1914-1916
Æsop and Hyssop

D R A M A

Glory of the Morning
Red Bird

B E L L E S - L E T T R E S

The Poet of Galilee
Socrates, Master of Life
Beowulf and the Niebelungen Couplet
The Scansion of Middle English Alliterative Verse
El Metro del Cid (in Spanish)
Byron and Byronism in America

T R A N S L A T I O N S

The Fragments of Empedocles
Belgium and Germany
Lucretius
The Vale of Content
Beowulf

A U T O B I O G R A P H Y

The Locomotive-God

A
SON OF EARTH

COLLECTED
POEMS BY

WILLIAM ELLERY
LEONARD



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To
MY MOTHER

ἔσπερε . . . φέρεις ματέρι παῖδα

Explanatory Note

Aside from verse-translations of Empedocles (OPEN COURT), Lucretius (EVERYMAN'S LIBRARY), and the Anglo-Saxon epic, *Beowulf* (CENTURY), my verse-books have been: *The Vaunt of Man* (1912), *The Lynching Bee* (1920), *Tutankhamen and After* (1924), *Two Lives* (1925), all published by B. W. HUEBSCH, now THE VIKING PRESS; and *Æsop and Hyslop* (1913), published by THE OPEN COURT, for extensive excerpts from which I herewith tender appreciative acknowledgments. *Sonnets and Poems* (much of which was incorporated in *The Vaunt of Man*) was privately printed in 1906 and again in 1909; and *Poems 1914-16*, war-time comments, early in 1917 . . . and speedily withdrawn from circulation. The fragments of Sappho were published (1925) in Showerman's *Readings in Ancient Classical Literature* (CENTURY). There is too a manuscript, *This Midland City*, in the hands of EDWARD W. TITUS, the Paris publisher of Lewisohn's *The Case of Mr. Crump*, to appear sooner or later in a limited edition.

The present volume is composed of poems from all the above list, excepting the three translations and the long narrative, *Two Lives*. The principle of selection was relative quality—whether rigidly enough applied, I cannot say—somewhat modified by the principle of arrangement. For the principle of arrangement was autobiographic, with reference to activities, aims, situations, influences (nature, personalities, books), crises, and impact of public events. The volume is thus, in intention, a “poem-sequence,” in eighteen episodes, about one life-time . . . about one son of earth . . . analogous on a larger scale to a sonnet-sequence (which characteristically touches on diverse or successive moments in one episode of a life-time), in distinction to the explicit narrative technique of *Two Lives* and to the prose chronicle and scientific analysis in the clinical

autobiography, *The Locomotive-God* (CENTURY). Except in the first section, inevitably retrospective, and in the seventeenth, where, as a phase of that life-time, the successions of latter dates have been blurred, the order of poems corresponds in large part approximately to the order of composition—over the past thirty years—though experiences in the earlier sections sometimes reverberate in the later. Thus, again in intention, the volume registers changes in art as well as in life; and, in so far as it achieves organic unity, the whole is more than the sum of the parts.

W. E. L.

Madison, Wisconsin,
April 6, 1928.

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I. GETTING STARTED

*Some moments of early
years in retrospect.*

The Dawn [FOR C. F. S.]

*Friend, you recall how we lingered above the bluffs of Wisconsin,
Talking of Roman and Greek there by the Indian stream,
Under a sun of September, apart from the camp in the dingle,
Once on a wonderful noon, nearly a decade ago?—
Minded of that, I am minded to give you a lyrical secret:
How in the breast of a lad love of the Muses began.*

Fresh from a starry sleep, on a school-boy morning of April
(Over the meadows a mist, oriole out in the elm),
Fresh from my dreams of the Marvelous Book I had opened
at bed-time
(Pictures of altar and urn, Sibyl, Silenus, and lyre),
There in the homestead at Hilton I sat by the window with
Vergil:

Under the morning star, words like woods to explore.
Tityre, tu patulæ. . . . O eery quest in the silence!
Magic of dawn on the earth, magic of dawn in the boy!
Thrilling from letter to letter and every word an enchant-
ment. . . .

Silvestrem tenui . . . even ere meaning was known!
Eager, how eager my fingers divided the glossary's pages,
Finding me key after key, golden though printed in black!
Proudly, how proudly my spirit deployed its strength over
grammar,

Linking the noun to its kin, binding the verb to its man.
Then, as the words became phrases and phrases grew into verses
(Change as subtle and vast, even as cell into flow'r),
O can I tell you the soul of the beautiful poignant Adventure
(Sun just over the hill, oriole out in the elm),

There in the quiet of morning, with sleepers three in the home-
stead

(Father who'd bought me the Book, mother and sister who
knew),

Where, with the mist on the meadow, I sat by the window
with Vergil:

Sat with the soul of the dead—living again in my own!—
Back by the Mantuan uplands, Mincius stream, and Cremona
(Far, how far from the mill, down by the Quarry and
Cave);

Seeing, as never before, though often I'd wandered the hillsides
(After the dogwood in spring, after persimmons in fall),
Feeling, as never before, though often I'd wandered the valleys
(Summer and winter away—off to the orchards and oaks),
Seeing, and feeling, and hearing the Tree as a Being of nature
(Tityrus under the beech, oriole out in the elm) . . .

Tityre, tu patulæ recubans sub tegmine fagi:

Tegmine fagi . . . the Tree! *Tegmine fagi* . . . the Bird!
Out of that tree, as I fancy, have budded all blossoms and crea-
tures,

Flowed all rivers I know, whispered all winds I have heard.
Tityre, lentus in umbra . . . Man's mystical union with Nature,
Man in his sorrow and joy, came to me there "in the shade."
Dulcia linquimus arva . . . the love of the acres we've planted,
Love that is pain when we go, wanderers ever on earth.

Nos patriam fugimus . . . and home and country were dearer
(Though we had caroled at school "Country, my country of
thee") . . .

Formosam resonare doces Amaryllida silvas. . . .

(Bessie with ribbon and braid, oriole out in the elm). . . .

Formosam resonare . . . and sylvan Muse and the reed-
pipe! . . .

Magic of dawn on the earth, magic of dawn in the boy!

Friend, sometime on a walk in the willows west of 'Mendota
(Sunset Point if you will,—*Wingra* or *Oregon Road*),

Let us unravel, in sportive discourse and deft analytic,
Purport and cause of the spell, here recorded for you:

*For, of a truth, you have guarded the Gift, have guarded and
given,
Loving the Greek in man's soul—quickened to-day in how few.*

The Wildman

But still the wildman calls the tameless boy;
Primeval instincts of the cave and tree,
The summons of the years that used to be,
Ages before Achilles fought at Troy,
Calls him abroad to his ancestral joy
With spear and belt and arrow; and he stands
Out on the rocks, and peers with lifted hands
For wolf to flee or wigwam to destroy.

Thus, when I mark in our museum a lance,
A feathered stick, a twisted curio,
I think with pride in my omnipotence:
"I made these things ten thousand years ago,
Where the sun set on plains that now are France,
Upon my ways from Pyrenees to Po."

Games

A boy I mastered exercise and game:
I threw the discus, and I drove the ball;
I ran the course, I cleared the hurdles all;
At boxing swift in parry, lunge, and aim;
A wrestler, fencer, turner; with a frame
To skate in moonlight down the river where,
On summer noondays, diving bronze and bare,
I swam the bend for joy and not for fame.

And these, with mastery of plane and saw,
Judged as traditions of wise years behind,
No less than legend, language, art, and law—
I mean as wisdom of our human kind—
I hold, with something of historic awe,
Among the assets of a noble mind.

The Good Cause

Round the old house where lilacs bloomed and died,
Armed with the mimic bow my father gave,
A boy I marched and dreamed of coast and cave
And bears descending from the mountain side;
Or down dusk vistas of the arbor, wide
And cool with scent of grapes, I sped to save
Fair ladies lost in woods, for I was brave
And sought adventure equal to my pride.

That house is down; the high hour never came;
The boy remembered but in tale or jest;
Yet the good cause, O Life, is still the same;
I see the days, the scope, of East and West;
The shapes I see are of heroic name—
Scorn, poverty, disease—and this is best.

The Shops

A boy, I'd cycle with my thoughts for friend,
Lured to the distant factories at town's-end . . .
Out where the chugging tractor patched the road
Before you cross the river at the bend.

Those houses . . . they were long and red and low,
With endless windows; all one barren row . . .
And sometimes there would be, I think, in each
A bended head with neither nod nor speech;
And sometimes pallid profiles, to and fro;
And sometimes windows, even in the day,
All lighted with a lurid inner glow
That swept the pallid profiles quite away. . . .

Inside the whirring halls and windowed wings,
One afternoon I saw the awful things,—
And touched the men who didn't seem afraid,
Whatever flared, or swung, or whirled, or roared . . .

Those houses . . . not like houses in our ward . . .

A sense of Something mighty being made
That must have been begun so long ago . . .
I thought it would be big enough when done . . .
Some parts perhaps were ready down below . . .
To heave up half our highways in the sun
And lay us others, terrible and new,
To other places, known as yet to none . . .

To-day some older persons think so too.

In College Days

Twelve years ago. And can hate work so long,
Through seasons of so many a star and flower,
So many a mountain day and ocean hour,
So many friends who gave me song for song?
Twelve years ago. Though life with splendors throng,
That youth of sallow skin and visage sour—
My first encounter with the evil power—
Is still the slanderer who did me wrong.

Yet my old hate is but the poet's hate
Even for the ideal villain of the mind—
The mind alert forever to create
Its perfect type from every form it find—
The man himself could enter at my gate
Like any stranger with his dog behind.

II. AMONG THE MOUNTAINS

*That made me feel both small and big . . .
and that loomed long through later years.*

The Great Stone Face *

Primeval Presence, enthroned upon white space,
Who feel'st the lightnings wither on thy cheek,
Whose iron lips to cloud and thunder speak,
While slumbering æons crowd thy shadowy base;
Who seest far city, stream, and planted place
And the blue sunlight on the hundredth peak—
Inexorable, calm, abiding, bleak—
Hail! genius of the mountains, awful face.

Hail and farewell! My spirit faints, and soft
The winds blow inland from eternity;
Thee 'twere not well revisiting too oft
If I would bind the sheaves allotted me—
Thee, nor the everlasting stars aloft,
Nor reaches of the irrevocable sea.

Natura Magna

Gaze not at hearth-flame nor at funeral pyre
Too long in dreams or tears; but rise and bare
Your souls to lightning; see the mountain flare
Forth its wild torrents of essential fire!
Sit not too long by well-springs of desire
In shadowy woodlands with the white nymphs; fare
Out to blue ocean and the sun-bright air!—
Hark! the deep voice: "Exult ye, and aspire!

"As some god's festival on holy ground
Ye shall approach my universe afar,
Naked and swift as heroes, from all climes;
Thus ye shall fill an epos with new sound,
Thus ye shall yield new names for many a star,
And thus from ye shall date the aftertimes."

* The earliest poem in this book, as to time of composition.

For a Forest Walker [MARGUERITE]

Quaff the mid-forest spring! Sink palms and knees
 In the deep moss and let the big rank ferns
 Strike on the flushed cheek and the fevered neck,
 And let your hair, warmed in those sultry shades,
 Float, with the oozy twigs and yellow leaves,
 The near black water! O with pursèd lips
 Quaff till you feel it cool in heart and frame—
 Then up through pines and thickets to the light!

Yonder the valley and the mountain lake!
 The sunset clouds are trembling in the waves,
 The wild deer drink among the windy rocks;
 And you shall call for joy aloud, and hear
 A mountain echo that will die away
 Seven times repeated on the crimson air!

Remarks [ON READING OF THE INTENDED SALE OF THE
 WHITE MOUNTAINS TO A LUMBER COMPANY]

The nations have rebuked us: "Greed for gold
 Costs ye voice, vision; costs ye faith and fame."
 Is this their envy? Shall we gloss our shame
 Writing it "Progress," "Enterprise"? Behold
 Our civic life a trade, our rich men old
 Bribing Opinion for an honest name,
 And art and letters counted jest or blame,
 When (but how seldom!) they will not be sold.

We traffic with our birthright: our domain
 Of torrents thundering inland shall be dumb—
 We have sold our cataracts to turn our mills;
 And having lifted up our eyes in vain,
 Whence our help cometh, but no more may come,
 Now we would sell the everlasting hills!

III. OVERSEAS AND BACK

Wanderers

What makes us wander? The west wind's call and cry
When frost is on the stubble? The harvest moon
Crowning the hill-road? The diffused noon
Of summer and reaches of unruffled sky?
Sunset? Or sea? Or rivers gliding by
Around the bluffs? Or snow against the face?
Or some dim sense of earth itself in space,
When at the spring the wild geese northward fly?

Is it in the blood?—impulse of veined feet
And sinewy thighs that wither if they rest?
Is it in the soul?—to whom the Incomplete
Is challenge to the immemorial quest,
The soul that leaves To-day in winding sheet
For some To-morrow with stars upon its breast.

The Aëry City [GÖTTINGEN, GERMANY]

The aëry city, temple and tower, sleeps.
O'er the broad fields, around her and below,
Lies the blue waste of far unfooted snow,
And takes no shadows from her walls and keeps.
The sun, like death, upon the blank sky creeps,
With pallid disk of silver, tacit, slow—
No winds betwixt this sun and city blow—
In adamant day the city sleeps.

I pace beside her. All is dreamy cold.
I listen, and no music answers me:
I name the lost, the lucid hills of old,
The violet banks and the melodious lea,
The virgin breasts and sky and year of gold—
Mine, ere I crossed the unreturning sea.

Mein Tischgenosse

That head close-cropped as bowl or cannon-ball,
The snub-nose and the smirk of a mustache,
The puffy cheek, seamed with a villain gash
Got in a duel with a corporal,
That speckled vest, the ring upon the small
Left finger, where the ruby used to flash,
That air of "ladies-I-possess-the-cash,"
That tone of "gentlemen-I-know-it-all"—

My long lost enemy!—O how we'd glare
Across the table in the dear old days,
When cherries ripened in the German air,
And through the window shone the summer haze,
While Fraeulein Emmi sat between us there
And served demurely *Leberwurst* and *Kaes'*.

The Sail [FROM THE RUSSIAN]

White gleams the lone sail far from shore
In purple mists and boundless wind;
What seeketh she in lands before?
What has she left in homes behind?

The foam is thrown about her prow,
Her bending mast is beat with spray;
But ah, no hope she seeketh now,
And from no hope she rides away.

Beneath, blue streams of ocean lea;
Above, blue day in east and west—
But for the wild storm yearneth she,
As if amid the storm were rest.

Buddha [FROM THE GERMAN OF ARNO HOLZ]

By night around my temple grove
watch seventy brazen cows.
A thousand mottled stone lampions flicker.

Upon a red throne of lac
I sit in the Holy of Holies.

Over me
through the beams of sandalwood,
in the ceiling's open square,
stand the stars.

I blink.

Were I now to rise up,
my ivory shoulders would splinter the roof,
and the oval diamond upon my brow
would stave in the moon.

The chubby priests may snore away.
I rise not up.
I sit with legs crossed under
and observe my navel.

It is a blood red ruby
in a naked belly of gold.

Mignon [FOR HELEN]

Know'st thou the land where bloom the citron rows,
In dusky leaves the golden orange glows,
And soft a wind is borne from bluest sky,

And stands the myrtle still, the laurel high?
Know'st thou the land?

O there, O there
Would I with thee, O my belovèd, fare!

Know'st thou the house? On pillars rest the beams.
The hall it shines; the shimmering room it gleams;
And marble statues stand and look at me:
"What have men done, O my poor child, to thee!"
Know'st thou the house?

O there, O there
Would I with thee, O my protector, fare!

Know'st thou the hill, its path in clouds and gray?
The mule he seeks through mountain mist his way;
In caverns dwell the dragons' ancient broods;
Down plunge the cliffs, and over them the floods.
Know'st thou the hill?

O there, O there
Lies our own way. O father, let us fare!

Venice in Rain [EARLY MORNING]

The island city of our orient dreams
Sleeps in a mist from haunted seas, and gray
Horizons dimly shut her from the day,
And rain is on her streets and understreams;
From off St. Mark's no crimson banner gleams;
No balcony with floating silk is gay;
No sails Byzantine dot the sunless bay;
Yet now a beacon, now a window beams:

And by old marble houses here and there
Her gondolas lie moored at step or door,
Like barks funereal about to bear
This lyric race unto no earthly shore,
With Titian's painted dames of russet hair
And Tasso's lute—away forevermore.

A Roman Pleasantry [CATULLUS, XXVI]

Your country-house is not exposed
To any blustering gale—
But, since your mortgagees foreclosed,
It's now exposed for sale:
And *this* exposure, none can doubt,
Is likely, friend, to freeze you out.

A Home-Coming Long Ago [CATULLUS, XXXI]

O my gem of almost-islands and of islands, Sirmio,
Whatsoever, wheresoever lucid inland waters flow,
Wheresoever out in ocean sun may shine or wind may blow!
O how gladly, O how madly I rejoice again to be
(After all the Asian lowlands wandered over wearily)
Here at last, my little island, safe at last with home and thee!
What so dear as cares completed when the mind lays down the
load,
And the way-worn feet that wandered take again the home-
ward road;
And upon the bed we longed for we can go to sleep again—
O alone reward enough for all the labor, all the pain!
Hail, my Sirmio, the lovely, greet your master and be gay;
Greet him, all ye Lydian billows, plashing up the sands at
play—
With your laughter greet Catullus, back again with you to-day.

The Scholar's Return

Robin, give another chirp in the apple tree!
Robin, come and pull a worm and cock your head at me!

After all the weary quest up and down the lands—
Castles on the green hills, sphinxes in the sands,
Cities by the river-lights, bridges far away,—
Here again and home again, nevermore to roam again,
Here again to-day!

After all the pedant zest in among the books—
Parchments old and red and gold in monastic nooks,
Hic and *hoc* and *languedoc*, Caxtons, Elzevirs,—
Here again and back again, nevermore to pack again,
After years and years!

After playing connoisseur at a painted wall—
Pea-green damsel, purple mamsell, king and seneschal,
Saintly soul and aureole, ruin and morass,—
Here with eyes to see again the haycock down the lea again,
Lounging in the grass!

Robin, give another chirp in the apple tree!
Robin, come and pull a worm and cock your head at me!

IV. MARGUERITE

*Some records of the first great surprise . . .
that delayed my Doctorate at Columbia, and
precipitated a second voyage overseas.*

The Jester

*('Tis little here nor there to you
Or me what now I say,
But just another rhyme or two
To pass the time of day.
You like my rhymes, you say you do,
They are so very gay.)*

I knew a fool who followed one
Bright lady of the land.
The lady smiled the fool upon,
So regally and bland,
And had him put his coxcomb on
And sit and hold her hand.

Then would she smile his rhymes to hear,
And pet him and aver
Her fool was twenty times as dear
As other ladies' were.
(And right was she, for all the year
He rhymed to only her.)

For all the year he'd rhyme and dream
(O that's a fool his part),
"My lady's fair as fair may seem
And loves me without art,"—
Until the heart leapt up in him.
(A fool may have a heart!)

The lady marked his heart to leap
And thought, "Of every jest
That through my poor fool's brain can creep
This is indeed the best."
(For let a fool but love and weep
The whole fool stands confessed.)

The fool he told (ah, foolishly),
His love he told so true;
He scarce did see her shallow glee
At what a fool could do;
Till jested she, "Nay, fool, ah me,
I am not worthy you."

The fool he did not understand
(His wits had little lore),
The fool he could not understand
(But O, his heart was sore).
He left the lady of the land
And jested nevermore.

The lady of the land did grieve
For hours twenty-four;
Another fool she did receive
Long ere the next was o'er:
For every lady, I believe,
Must have one fool—or more.

*('Tis little here nor there to you
Or me what now I say,
'Twas but another rhyme or two
To pass the time of day.
You like my rhymes, you say you do,
They are so very gay.)*

The Bitterest Hour

Thou hast poured poison in my cup of gall!
The mountain echo o'er the lake and lea,
The mountain sunsets, flaming wild and free,
The mountain stillness of the stars, the fall
Of mountain waters, and the shadowy call
Of mountain birds had blessed and haunted me,
Blent with a mountain memory of thee,
When bitter years had urged me far from all:

O dear as inspiration! life and light,
And olden love, and immemorial mood
Were with me yet in sordid house and hall—
Till, like the pest, dank-fingered in the night,
Thy treachery fouled my soul's last livelihood,
And poured the poison in my cup of gall.

A Voyage

As hunted as the veriest thief that flees
I crossed the city of dead hope that day,
With no farewells, and boarded at the quay
The high red liner, headed for the seas.
The brown smoke boiled from out her stack; the breeze
Fluttered two flags; the deck with folk was gay;
The whistle shrieked; the ropes were cast away,
And forth she steamed.

She passed the isles, the leas,
The green hills, left and right. Behind at home
The gray towers faded far. The setting sun
Shot golden lines along our wake of foam;
The ocean stars rose round us one by one,
I took my berth to close my eyes and weep;
I cared for nothing—I was on the deep.

The Drachenfels

Of old we housed us on the Hampshire hill,
We plucked the wild rose and the columbine
By roadside birch, we planted woodland vine
Around the door; we leapt the rock, the rill;
We saw a hundred mountain suns all still
And gold go down the sky; with cheek on mine
A hundred eves you sat beneath the pine
And twilight moon to hear the whippoorwill
With me of old.

And now!—deep seas divide,
Deep seas and deeper hate.—The Rhine is fair
Through mists of morning, and along its side
The Drachenfels uplifts its ruin bare
Before me; and I stand in sullen pride,
And of your lot will neither know nor care.

The Image of Delight

O how came I that loved stars, moon, and flame,
And unimaginable wind and sea,
All inner shrines and temples of the free,
Legends and hopes and golden books of fame;
I that upon the mountain carved my name
With cliffs and clouds and eagles over me,
O how came I to stoop to loving thee—
I that had never stooped before to shame?

O 'twas not thee! Too eager of a white
Far beauty and a voice to answer mine,
Myself I built an image of delight,
Which all one purple day I deemed divine—
And when it vanished in the fiery night,
I lost not thee, nor any shape of thine.

Ashes

Love! and my soul like ashes at thy feet!
Love! and blind tears * and shattered hopes that fell!
A mad forgiveness—and a wild farewell!—
And broken steps along an old-world street,
The seas between us!—then the withering heat—
The hate that, like a demon roused from hell,
Smote into flame the splendor and the spell,
Till thou to me wert ashes, Marguerite!—

Yes, I remember.—But when storms are done,
The wet leaves sparkle on the mountain tree;
The gold clouds lie about the setting sun;
The blue waves roll their white crests in from sea;
The gentle stars mount heaven one by one
With ancient light, as now they mount to me.

Pain and Speech

Pain drove me from the music and the hall,
Far from the city and the golden truth,
In starless midnights of a blasted youth,
Out to the iron hills, beyond recall,
Where in lone speech I sought to burst my thrall,
Then to return with records, holding sooth
And song and art for men; but fang and tooth
Bit at my throat and choked my lungs with gall
And flame yet more.—

O art is to the free!
When pain is torn, like viper, from the breast,
Its head in dust beneath the heel, and we
Know it can nevermore uplift its crest—
Then, and then only, may we masters be,
Telling experience to East and West.

* An embarrassing illustration of sheer literary intrusion—for I've scarcely shed a real tear since my last spanking in the woodshed of the old homestead, circa 1884.

Compensation

I know the sorrows of the last abyss: *
 I walked the cold black pools without a star;
 I lay on rock of unseen flint and spar;
 I heard the execrable serpent hiss;
 I dreamed of sun, fruit-tree, and virgin's kiss;
 I woke alone with midnight near and far,
 And everlasting hunger, keen to mar;
 But I arose, and my reward is this:

I am no more one more amid the throng:
 Though name be naught, and lips forever weak,
 I seem to know at last of mighty song;
 And with no blush, no tremor on the cheek,
 I do claim consort with the great and strong
 Who suffered ill and had the gift to speak.

The Law with Life for Gloss

Christ, wilt thou stand once more and gloss the Law?
 If wage of ill be death and wage of good
 Were surely life, O Rabbi, Master, could
 My soul have reaped this harvest, chaff and straw,
 And burning thistle, that had sowed with awe
 In God's own sun, for love and livelihood—
 Still trusting thee, O Christ, not understood—
 A field as fair as husband ever saw?

But Christ: "Man's faith when man goes out to sow,
 Even as man's grief when man comes back to reap,
 Are more than seed or harvest—let them go.
 Thy soul's experience as new winters sweep
 New summers from the hills, at last shall know
 To gloss the Law—for lo, the Law is deep."

* So it seemed in the middle twenties.

Resolve

There is an end. The fever and the pain,
The craving unto life with that far hope
Of mornings and of twilights, seen by two,
Shall torture me no more. The nightly stars
Beam downward and the sun and moon arise
And pass o'er earth with all its snows and grass
And towers and scattered graves, and seeds are blown
And pestilence with winds, and there be tears
For sorrow, smiles for joy. The Eternal Law
Works in all regions, bringing light and dark.
It works in me. It makes in me an end
Even of the woe which it before had wrought,
And leads me to the springs beyond the mount,
Beyond all populous cities, where each man
Must flee when all is lost, and in myself
I find at last the rod which strikes the rocks
Of living waters.

I have garnered long
O'er many lands, in many books. I own
Old trees and castles, cataracts and heights,
And orient cities dusk along the Nile,
Old fountains, marbles, pictures, red and gold,
From blue Valdarno, and old meters too
From Scio, Delphi, Mantua down the South,
From northern Weimar and the Avon stream
And folksongs of the Alp and Apennine
And German rivers. Lo, I own the dream
Of Plato and the hardness of Kant.
I have all wealth within me; I will look.

And I have that within me which shall build
Even from the fragments of dead hopes a house.

V. NEW YORK

*Where I was student, lover, friend, enemy,
and poetical vagabond . . . under towers far
higher than when in childhood I had crossed
Brooklyn Bridge holding my father's hand.*

New York in Sunset

The island city of dominion stands,
Crowned with all turrets, o'er the waters' crest,
Throned, like the bright Cybèle of the West,
And hailed with cymbals in a million hands
Around her: yet serenely she commands
The inland vision and the ocean quest,
The new-born mistress of the world's unrest,
The beauty and the terror of the lands.

She sees the fields of harvest sown for her,
She sees the fortress set beside her gate,
Her hosts, her ships, she sees through storm and fire;
And hers all gifts of gold and spice and myrrh,
And hers all hopes, all hills and shores of fate,
And hers the fame of Babylon and Tyre.

The Express

She comes! I hear her whistle mount the air
High o'er the howling storm, and down the black
Gulf of the station, where the level track
Shoots into night, I see her headlight flare!
The swaying bell rings out its wild beware,
The long, low smoke is trailing from her stack,
The chill draught strikes—the crowd is pressing back,
She comes, she stops—how terrible and fair!

Would mine her swift night in the windy gorge,
O'er trestles shaken with a mountain roar,
O'er snow-swept plain, by factory and forge,
By lights of cities on the inland shore,
And island beacons!—O would mine her hour
Of large experience and splendid power!

With the Age

For good or ill, I master thy desire,
O age and country, making thy life mine;
I fell the forest and I lay the line;
I guide the cranes that swing the steel from fire
And flaring blast; I ride the inland flyer
Through the sown fields; in earth's vast rain and shine
I coast the sea with many a bold design,
And visit cities, climbing tower and spire,

And look abroad and say: "How strong ye are!
How ominous and wide! What new-born will
Is housed among ye, cities near and far
By cape and river and the changeless hill!
How large your dreams, when 'neath the polar star,
The winter night lies round ye, cold and still."

Israel

Singer of hymns, by Sinai who adored
The Fire, the Trumpet, the eternal Law;
Builder of temples, from Zion's hill who saw
Dawn smite the heathen with Jehovah's sword;
Exiled of nations, long for no reward
Keeping thy Sabbaths and thy Feasts with awe;
Victor of sorrows on a bed of straw,
Come unto us, O Israel of the Lord!

Here, past the Gentile seas, the stars by name
Shine with the Ages' welcome; here anew
Thy rainbow towers; here thy mountains wait.—
Come, and then fill us with thy holy flame!—
We have a word to speak, a work to do,
If once, like thine, our soul be consecrate.

The Editor

I met you first, when once for livelihood
I roamed Broadway, a vagrant from the boat,
A song of life for sale within my coat,
My soul on fire for all things large and good;
And there before your desk of walnut wood
With wide-spread shanks you smoked your pipe and wrote
One of those quips the smart set loves to quote,
And looking round leered at me where I stood,
A dreamer and a lover. . . .

I marked your beard,
Frizzled and brown, your cold gray eyes, the tone
That meant "I rate men merely as the herd
May serve my turn—what is it?" As one reared
Among the mountains, conscious of mine own,
I bowed and went my ways without a word.

A Hypocrite

Your sleek hypocrisy in white cravat
May cheat your grocer on his office stool,
Your oily accents, plausible and cool,
May please your widowed tenant and her cat;
And pompous pride, in broadcloth, fed and fat,
May seem an oracle in Sunday school—
And yet I know you both for knave and fool;
So spare your grinning and put on your hat.

Eternity itself were scarce enough
To learn a true man's quality, were he
Still but the humblest of a peasant stripe;
But the poor tinsel of your proper stuff
I mark, established artist though you be,
With one glance sideways as I fill my pipe.

With Some Manuscript Poems

[TO LUDWIG LEWISOHN]

This charge to thee. Because I hold thee free
On stream or mount or at the temple's base,
As one not wavering to pride in place,
To brazen trumpet or to golden fee,
As one who in the pools of life can see
Still somewhat of old dignity and grace,
Still somewhat of the bright reflected face
Of cloud or sky or moon, this charge to thee:

I fear the pest of all-involving night,
I fear the fumes that, gathering round my head,
May choke to silence the one word of might
Life laid upon me: comrade, I am dead—
Thou livest; report me and my cause aright,
And lay for love a laurel on my bed.

In Reply [TO G. S. V.]

I pondered how to answer gift with gift—
Your amber vellum with some book of gold
In crimson letters, that for you should hold
Meet harvest of some elder poet's thrift—
And heart beat wildly, and my soul did drift
Up life's dim eddies to the days of old,
When we together, wandering passion-souled,
Saw, round the Mountain, cloud and tempest lift,
Showing the Sungod and the Lyre.

And then
The distant magic of your verse I heard
Louder, and marked strange visions far and wide,
And, as one rapt beyond the light of men,
I murmured (altering a familiar word),
"The marvelous boy who conquered in his pride."

A Dedication

[FOR A PRIVATELY PRINTED COLLECTION OF VERSE]

You gave me life and will for life to crave:
 Desires for mighty suns, or high, or low,
 For moons mysterious over cliffs of snow,
 For the wild foam upon the midsea wave;
 Swift joy in freeman, swift contempt for slave;
 Thought which would bind and name the stars and know;
 Passion that chastened in my overthrow;
 And speech, to justify my life, you gave.

Life of my life, this late return of song
 I give to you before the close of day;
 Life of your life! which everlasting wrong
 Shall have no power to baffle or betray,
 O father, mother!—for you watched so long,
 You loved so long, and I was far away.

New York Days [TO LUDWIG LEWISOHN]

'Tis something for a poet's lip—
 Our memorable comradeship.

The Empire City of the isle
 Threw down on us her awful smile.
 "My fate be on you," said the Voice;
 "Aspire, and if you can, rejoice. . . ."

We entered, through a portico,
 By ample steps that flanged below,
 A dome supreme and luminous,
 But housing statues not for us;
 And, sullen, made o'er marble tile
 Dumb exit through the brazen stile:
 The college of the liberal arts
 Was not the college of our hearts—
 We had some other ends to win. . . .

We saw the iron ships come in
From Brooklyn Bridge, the civic towers
That loomed too large for earth of ours,
The pits between, the smoky pall;
The stony shadows vertical
Aslant up many a windowed wall. . . .
I've read that in the Middle Age,
When Dante made his pilgrimage,
Each Tuscan baron, born to feud,
Who housed in city walls imbued
With blood of Ghibelline and Guelf,
Built a high watch-tower for himself,
And travelers over Alps looked down
On many a grim imperial town
That rose in rugged silhouette
Of parapet by parapet
Without a spire, a tree, a home—
'Twas thus with Pisa, Florence, Rome.
But here it seemed some giant broods
Had raised the bulwarks of their feuds
And mastered Titan altitudes!

We watched on slopes of Morningside
Broad Hudson wrestling with the tide,
Or from the granite balustrades
The sunset o'er the Palisades,
Where glowed the Cosmos in the west,
Like lightning flashes made to rest
And lie an hour manifest. . . .

We passed in moonlight down the malls
Beneath the dusky citadels;
We wound from curve to curve in cars
On lofty girders under stars;
We drank in music-halls, aflame
With lantern green and scarlet dame;
And held, where passion most was rife,
Our fevered talk of human life. . . .

And through the snow, the wind, the gloom,
We journeyed to each other's room,
In those lamp-lit ærial crypts,
Piled with our books and manuscripts—
So far above the flash and roar
We seemed encaved forevermore
Upon some cliff or mountain shore;
We read in bardic ecstasies
Catullus or Simonides,
Or chanted verses of our own
In slow sonorous monotone,
That sometimes clove so true and free,
To us, 'twas immortality;
We shared the agony of tears
Pierced by the ignominious years.

And I long since was inland driven
To climb the hills of God as given,
While you again are by those seas
With more of vision, power, peace.
We overcame. But 'twas the press
Of no ignoble restlessness—
Outside the law yet not outside,
By austere issues justified,
And justified, were all else vain,
By brotherhood of song and pain.

Not an Academician

Your courts and carven porticos excel,
You've set the busts and bound the books of fame,
You've taught me many a date and many a name
Of Heaven and Earth and seven pits of Hell;
And, planning once for long with you to dwell,
I bought me purple robes and tried the same,
But ever on the midnight rose a flame—
O friends of austere memory, farewell!

No, no! persuade not: "Thou shalt trust the day,
The marble order, the preciser creed,
Thou shalt acknowledge law and bate the fire";
For I must answer: "There is one only way—
The night revealed it—though I fall and bleed,
God help me, I will trust the heart's desire."

VI. LYNN-BY-THE-SEA

Schoolmastering . . . but only in the morning . . . and living as in a turret of glass at the top of a house on the top of a hill just beyond the beach and the breakers, and seeing ocean-horizons crossed by sails and smoke-stacks far away.

Coastwise [NORTH SHORE]

All night, fog-bound in murky seas we rode
Off perilous capes and nameless coasts of dread,
Our vague lights seeking, like dim ghosts in red,
The pallid regions round our dusk abode;
The moonless tides beneath us ebb'd and flow'd;
And unseen ships that bolder steered ahead
Shrieked weird and far, like voices of the dead,
And all night long we answered where we rode.

But with the morn the sun came vast and round,
And winds came golden o'er the wide blue sea,
And, weighing anchor in a world of light,
We scudded down the main and made the sound
And marked the port, our city of the free,
Low on the purple sky, secure and bright.

The Steamer

The steamer plows the middle sea
With smoke behind and foam before;
And through whatever nights there be
She anchors not from shore to shore:

Though head winds smite her onward form
And waves from east to west be hurled,
Though ocean stars be hid in storm
Beyond the glimpses of the world,

Her needle tells the unseen path,
Eternal law to her desire;
And her unconquered speed she hath
In quenchless heart of flame and fire.

The Ancient Mariner

Ages ago I ranged the outer seas,
The shimmering main that moves below the moon,
The shoreless waters of the vaulted noon,
The drizzling oceans winter could not freeze;
With halyards twisted by the Genoese,
And sails of linen from the docks of Tyre,
I bounded onward: for the western fire
Beaconed between the Gates of Hercules.

While yesterday, with hundred flags unfurled
By all the nations, dwelling either side,
I swept from Azores round the Horn to Spain,
And left behind me, circling all the world,
As æry offspring of my speed and pride,
The long smoke winnowed by the sun and rain.

For Husbandmen [ON THE COAST]

No more shall thunder and the lightning's bane
Darken and terrify the populous lea—
The afternoon comes buoyant from the sea,
Like a fresh dawn across an upland plain.
The shadows sweep the purple hills again;
At mountain distance rides the rainbow free;
There is a whisper as of days to be,
And earth's new odor rises after rain
In golden steam.—

O husbandmen, go forth!
Primeval, wise, shag-browed and large of hand,
You workers still beneath the law of old!—
The utmost cities of the South and North
Await their health of you; and all the land
Against late years for you puts by its gold.

Rain

Who loves the sun and stars shall love the rain;
Who walks the mountain with the golden cloud
Shall cringe not at the mountain thunder, loud
Beyond the lightning and the hurricane.
Who swims the blue cove shall abide the main
When black with storms, still buoyant and uncowed;
Who feels earth's light about him as a shroud,
Shall feel earth's vast, earth's elemental rain.

O love you not the forest, bird, and flower,
And shadowy shapes of sunlight down the glen,
And moonbeams scattered in the midnight wood?
O wait! O listen! Earth's revolving hour
Brings you anon the forest rain again
And dusk and music of her ancient mood!

The Wreck

I know where clings among the rocks and kelp,
And shelvy sands that boil at ebbing tide,
Far from the folk on whom she called for help,
Far from the fog-swept lighthouse yellow-eyed,
A battered steamer on her iron side,
With stacks inclining to the setting sun,
Like rusty cannon whose last booming died
On some abandoned fortress: she is one
With all on land or sea whose mighty works are done.

VII. PHILADELPHIA

*When I sat with aching eyes at an office-desk
for two years, helping to make a dictionary
that was never printed.*

The Poet in the City

The mornings sweep with gust and snow
Round tower and bridge and sordid halls,
And cold the yellow evenings glow
Behind the city's somber walls.

And day by day, with dreams unsaid,
And fiery hope that will not die,
We toil anew for daily bread,
My still unconquered soul and I.

Our sunbright peaks are lost; we see
No more the midland rivers flow;
The echoes of our mountain glee
Became a memory long ago.

For us no more the good ship lifts
Its bounding prows in midsea day;
Its smoke on blue horizons drifts,
Somewhere in ocean far away.

But the swift songs we may not sing
(That comrade scarce would mark if sung),
Like winds of an eternal spring
Still sound for us and keep us young.

And still we boast our mountain birth,
Our hardy nurture on the sea,
Which give us, as the lords of earth,
The strength to labor and be free.

Χαῖρε Φῶς!

So, one by one, the inexorable years
 Have taught how slow my feet, how far the sun:
 Thy streams are wide, O world; thy clouds are dun;
 Thy mountains shadowy with the gulfs of fears,
 Where hangs the unfelled pine; thy dry wind seres;
 And reptiles foul thy pleasant springs that run;
 Yet though I die before the light be won,
 That light more dim to me at last for tears,

O let it be on some supreme far height,
 Facing some westward ocean, blue below,
 With might to lean upon the verge—with might
 To lift the arm and point that they may know,
 Who seek me dying, I die unto the light,
 And leave me dead in sunset lying so!

For a Drudger

Thou shalt win victory from this dull routine
 And crown thy head with laurel when 'tis won:
 This sure restraint thy youth was fain to shun
 Will put new manhood in thy step and mien,
 And in thy words, that something strong and keen
 Which comes of life when life has bravely done—
 Nor wilt thou all forget the mountain sun,
 Nor the wild Alps with winds and snows between.

Thou shalt win life: for thou shalt learn with awe
 How life is passion, but passion self-controlled,
 That flames, even as the stars, by ancient law,—
 Even as the stars that flame o'er field and fold,
 Beyond earth's nether coasts of gust and flaw,
 Bright, beautiful, unalterable and old.

Vigil

When austere hunger, the stern lord of all,
Shut me from day, the mountainous and free,
To sell for bread my golden liberty,
In her chief city her obscurest thrall,
I turned to night, deep night primordial;
On the bleak housetop I went up to see,
And in my desolation came to me
The starry vision of the flaming wall.

By chastening sorrow rendered fit and wise,
My utter dearth gave me immortal eyes,
And when night broke the day's blue dome, I passed
Coeval, outward where eternity
Fills her long coasts with winds than ours more vast
And radiance whiter than the polar sea.

The Test

Still at the wheel to labor down the sea
With battered funnels and with riven flags,
To overcome the mountains on bare crags
Above the thunder and the farthest tree,
To face a flaring city—the mad glee
And ululations of her reeling masques
And human drift—are self-sustaining tasks,
Because they challenge by their majesty.

But in these swamps behind the hovel yard
To make my obscene way through stench and flies
And oozy fibers, and refuse glass and shard,
And still to keep some token in my eyes
Of inward dignity and God's good skies,
This, this is manhood, this is truly hard.

The World and the Soul

The starry clouds about the world are blown,
And rain-fresh suns rise over mount and mead;
The slant pine sways in black crevasse; the weed
Swings its green locks in ocean on a stone;
The herds are on the hills; kings on the throne;
White cities rear their gates for show or need
And sing of heroes—and behold! a seed
Here on the coast of time, my soul is sown.

Yet lo! a world within its obscure cell—
Light, darkness, storms, shapes demon and divine,
The inward visions out of Heaven and Hell—
And choice to make the one or other mine!
Hold fast, my soul, hold fast and all is well!
Master thine own and every world is thine!

The Muse

Spirit, whom seer and singer name the Muse,
Be with me, radiant with thy peace and power,
When rocks are foaming and the main seas lower,
Or mountain sunsets widen with all hues;
Be with me when I wake in upland dews,
And when I walk in city dust or shower,
And when I love in hall or watch in tower;
Be with me when I win and when I lose!

Thou shalt be with me! The decree is mine!
And mine dominion and the primal will!
Though called no longer from Parnassus hill,
Thou shalt be with me and no less divine—
The immanent Vigilance, creating still
The nobler nature, the more bold design.

The Law Prevails

The Law prevails! When every silver gain,
So proudly won from furious greed of lust,
Lies with man's broken spirit in the dust,
And earth's pure winds blow over him in vain,
He sees in visions, born of utter pain,
The Law anew—how beautiful and just—
And its profound, majestic "*Thou must*"
Sounds in his soul like thunder down the plain
At twilight.

And he turns, he looks, he lifts
His empty hands, his pleading arms to heaven—
Then roused anew, then on anew, he shifts
His burden off and scorns to be forgiven—
While manhood's pride, his soul's salvation still,
Unto "*Thou must*" makes answer bold: "*I will.*"

Success

The people have imagined a vain thing,
Touching the old issues that are life: Success
Will still be reckoned in the more or less
Of riches, lands, or station; still we bring
Our homage to those paltry gods who fling
These paltrier favors round—to Custom, Dress,
To Etiquette, Discretion, Cleverness—
And still would smile if once more one should sing:

"Success is character, as riches are
In knowledge which no fire nor fraud can take;
The good man, conscious of the morning star,
Shall own all lands, as lovely for his sake;
His station is with counselors afar,
Who for eternal justice work and wake."

For a School of Artists

Hear me at last! I've read old books and new;
I've housed with sages either side the sea;
I've asked my soul when stars were over me;
I've watched in cities men with work to do;
I've been at Delphi when the eagle flew;
I've wept alone in dark Gethsemane;
And now I know, whatever gods there be,
Whatever temples rise, my guess was true:

The Good is good—and we shall tend the fire,
The holy flame that burns behind the veil!
And each design of ours and each desire
That would deny the eternal Good shall fail—
And art, that mocks that sunbright temple, must
Lie soon or late a harlot in the dust.

The Sculptor [FOR R. T. M.]

I wrought unaided, save
By wind and wood and wave,
And night and Mars the red,
And poets dead.

No man from sun to sun,
Seeing me, said, "Well done";
No woman smiled and chose
For me a rose.

But thus my arm at length
Did win a silent strength—
Thus here the statue stands
For all the lands.

Walt Whitman

In Washington in war-times, once I read,
When down the street the good gray poet came—
A roving vagabond unknown to fame—
From watches by the dying and the dead,
The old slouch hat upon his shaggy head,
His eyes aglow with earth's immortal flame,
Lincoln, who marked him from the window frame,
The judge of men, the deep-eyed Lincoln, said:
"That is a man."—

What poet has juster meed
Whose brazen statue in the morning stands
On marble avenues of elder lands?—
In life, in death, that was a man indeed.—
O you who 'gainst him lift your righteous hands,
And you, the fops that ape his manhood, heed!

Obscurity

My aims have brought me neither deed nor praise,
For they were bastards of unproved desire,
Got in unholy years to mock their sire
With fatal loves and desperate delays.
And thus for me no boisterous square shall blaze
With festal nights and pageantry of fire;
For me shall sound from no cathedral choir
The larger music of victorious days,

For me, the meagre, thwarted—O my soul,
Hast thou no tear? Nay, nay: there still abide
The mountain air, the sunset and the roll
Of thunder to the immemorial tide,
And the deep self of me within the Whole
Which, still by smiling, still is justified.

VIII. AMONG THE HILLS AGAIN

Resting up.

Behind the Old House

Behind the old house beds of lettuce grow;
The winds across the dancing red-top blow;
The brook is bright with blue forget-me-nots
As when we gathered long, long years ago.

Behind the old house on a trellis nod
The sweetpease (purple o'er the goldenrod),
Whose incense, like an unseen beauty, fills
The upland morning and the fields of God.

Behind the old house, down the narrow lane,
After long years the mountain sun again!
After long years the wide primeval dawn,
Gold o'er the white mists of the midland plain!

And how those years of sorrow glorify
The fresh, free, olden things of earth and sky!

With Mother Earth

'Tis well to spend a lucid afternoon
In the long silvery grass, with upturned eye
Noting the leaves that fret the azure sky;

'Tis well to wait the coming of the moon,
Out on the hillside, over fields of June.

'Tis well to listen, when abed we lie,
To midnight murmurs of the rain and try
To mark therein the world's primeval tune.

'Tis well to know that (spite of death and dearth
And evil men in cities plotting ill
And friends that leave us when our thoughts are new)

The good man may abide with Mother Earth
And dream his dreams and have his visions still
And trust the Infinite to see him through.

For Our Fathers' Sons

We must be heroes! Earth's old rivers flow,
But earth's religions comfort us no more,
And the old faith that looked so far of yore,
Lies, with all temples, bare to wind and snow;
But standing at our fathers' graves we know
(And this is much) that, spite of waste and war,
'Twere to deny our being to give o'er:
We shall be heroes! And for strength we go

(Will you not go?) out to the mountains!—Still,
Though we have glossed anew the psalmist's verse,
Our help shall come from out the ancient hill,
And we shall promise largely and fulfill,
Feeling, as heroes, our unconquered will,
Part of the epic of the universe!

The Ruined House

Come, come away!—
White was this house of ours,
Vanished to-day;
Warm in the shrubs and flowers,
Radiant in rainbow showers,
Facing the sunset's towers,
Golden as they.

House of desire!—
Born that there poets might
Sleep and aspire
Fragrant in full-moon light,
Rustling her vines by night,
Watching the comet's bright
Midsummer fire!

Let us be gone!
Fouly her rafters smolder
In the gray dawn;
And the black chimney shoulder,
Lone as the mountain boulder,
Stands, while the winter's colder
Winds come on.

IX. I COME TO MADISON

*. . . in 1906 . . . with great expectations
of vindicating "the American professor" as
scholar and poet.*

The White Metropolis [MADISON, WISCONSIN]

The white metropolis of winter rose,
In icy splendor over drift and dune,
Midway from setting sun to rising moon,
On frosty skies of gleams and afterglows.
An aëry place, a Venice of the snows,
With towers of crystal arabesque and rune,
And shimmering columns by many a frore lagoon,
She slumbered in imperial repose.

So still, so inland from the booming seas,
So clear, so far from battle-smoke or fen,
So cold, beyond all pestilence and fire—
A city with its own eternities,
Where hate nor love might enter in again,
Nor human cry, nor sorrow, nor desire.

A Presentation [TO W. R. N., WITH "FRAGMENTS OF
EMPEDOCLES IN ENGLISH VERSE"]

In my last winter by Atlantic seas,
How often, when the long day's task was through,
I found in nights of friendliness with you
The quiet corner of the scholar's ease,
While you explored the Orphic liturgies,
Or old Pythagoras' mystic One and Two,
Or heartened me with Plato's larger view,
Or the world-epic of Empedocles:

It cost you little; but such things as these,
When man goes inland following his star,
When man goes inland where the strangers are,
Build him a house of goodly memories:
So take this book in token, and rejoice
That I am richer having heard your voice.

To Friends

These verses to my friends: for scattered far
In many a land, O friends of mine, ye are.
Do ye remember, too? O ye who hear
White Mountain echoes all the northern year,
And ye who see snowfields of cotton-boll
In Carolinas, and ye twain who cull
The poppies on Italian fields and seize
Those golden sunsets for Rome's galleries,
Do ye remember? Ye of Lac de Genève,
Between blue Jura and our own Salève,—
Do ye remember, Franks of Switzerland?
And ye in utmost Moscow, with the hand
Secret and steady for that freedom yet
Ye swore at Göttingen, do ye forget?
And ye beneath the Drachenfels am Rhein,
Where books and wine and song and mellow shine
Of quiet suns made life almost divine,
And Fatherland, true Fatherland of mine?
And ye who walk the cities of the West,
And feel alone the teeming world's unrest,
Once felt together—and thou, too, tried and brave,
Who scatterest violets on an English grave,
Dost thou remember?

The same stars arise
All round the earth but lead us otherwise.

The Phantom Child

Where'er I go, in flowers or snow,
In spring or winter tide,
Through cities builded long ago,
O'er prairies waste and wide,
A sweet, a wild, a phantom child
Goes ever at my side.

The sunlight in her hair that lies
Seems from our early sea,
There is a token in her eyes
Of skies that used to be
(The violet dyes of summer skies)
When she looks up at me.

She laughs as one untouched by fears,
She laughs and takes my hand,
She wanders with me through the years
And on from land to land,
But yet she cannot see my tears,
Nor would she understand.

She takes my hand; she sees me still
The laughing lad of old,
She thinks we wander on the hill
In plots of white and gold,
She stops to hear the whippoorwill
In woodlands dusk and cold.

And though I know our hills are far
And oceans ebb and flow,
I have no music, mirth, nor star
Whose grace I cherish so—
A memory that no sin can mar
Nor sorrow overthrow.

The Scarlet Skater

[EPILOGUE FOR THE WINTER OF 1908-9]

O city of the inland domes along the Winter's track,
Whose hills were white by day and night o'er lakes of Arctic
fire,
Where the blue air drove your ice-boats out beside the bluffs
and back,
'Twas there among your skaters that I found my heart's
desire—

The tasseled head, the cloak of red,
The swiftest of your skaters with the feet that never tire!

Hands across we whirled away—away from all the rest
At set of sun, through silent wastes, and paths of orange fire,
Onward to the purple coves and woods below the west,
Where the rumbling ice was greener and the world-end winds
were higher—

Round tasseled cap and scarlet wrap,
The fleetest of your skaters with the stroke that would not tire.

With hands still fast, unharmed, at last around, around we bore,
At moonrise through the twilight, down a strip of lunar fire,
Orion floating up the south, where summer nights before,
I'd seen from out my light canoe the coming of the Lyre—
From light canoe, ere yet I flew
With her, the scarlet skater with the starlight streaming by her.

O City of the inland domes beneath the polar star
(Gold light, silver light, bells in the spire),
Where the blue air drove your ice-boats out along the bluffs
afar,
'Twas there among your daughters that I found my soul's
desire—
The flaming wings, the thrill of things,
The Spirit of the Far and Wide whose feet can never tire.

The Phantom Skater

The moon has burst the winter cloud,
And silvers all the frozen reeds,
And up a forest stream, a bowed
And solitary skater speeds.

His scarf floats o'er his bended back,
His curved blades shimmer in the night;

He hears the rumbling ice-field crack,
With stroke to left, with stroke to right.

The wild wind whirls from leaf and limb
The dry snow out across his path;
In wild ravines afar and dim
The wolves of famine howl in wrath.

I know not where he closed the door,
Nor whither bound, nor what the clime;
But on he glides forevermore,
A skater of the olden time:

They say he craves no earthly bread,
They say he cannot fear nor tire,
They say that he is spirit-fed,
And name him Phantom, Hope, Desire.

Ultima Thule [FOR COMMANDER PEARY]

It was not for the Arctic gold and a claim at the end of the
great white trail;
Nor yet for the Arctic lore—for a map of the floe and a graph
of the gale:
But the quest came out of a primitive urge in the blood of our
common birth—
The lure of the last lone verge and the desert end of the rolling
earth.

For this he abandoned the green of the world—the lakes and
the hills and the leas,
And rivers of midsummer nations, and banks with the corn and
the vine and the trees,
And the genial zones of the planet's rains, and the belt of the
planet's flowers;
For this he abandoned all cities—their households, their singing
and sunsets and towers.

Onward, north of the Northern Lights, hungry and cold and
alone,
Eternity under his frozen feet and the snows of the ages un-
known,
With never the boom of the purple seas, nor ever a mountain
of fire,
North of the Plain of the thousand slain—who were dead of
the same desire!—

Till the East and West were lost in the South, and the North
was no more, and he stood
Face to face with the ancient dream through his hope and his
hardihood;
And the alien skies where the polar sun went round the hori-
zon's rim
And the nameless ice below belonged at last to the race through
him.

The Vagabond

Around the world I've been in many a guise,
In cape, or furs, or oilskin, fronting Fate;
Down rainy seas, through many a stormy strait,
By upland forests, over hills that rise
White, green, or crimson in the season skies;
Through civic arch and eagle-crested gate,
Imperial boulevards and halls of state;
And asked for Fame—and failed of every prize. . . .

Except, except the experienced eye and free,
And these impregnable old sides of mirth;
Except, except a glorious wisdom, worth
All the poor scorn these tatters bring to me:
Some feeling for the massy bulk of earth,
Some still monitions of mortality.

To the Victor

Man's mind is larger than his brow of tears:
This hour is not my all of Time; this place
My all of Earth; nor this obscene disgrace
My all of Life; and your complacent sneers
Shall not pronounce my doom to my compeers
Whilst the Hereafter lights me in the face,
And from the Past, as from the mountain's base,
Rise, as I rise, the long tumultuous cheers.

And who slays *me* must overcome a world:
Heroes at arms, and virgins who became
Mothers of children, prophecy and song;
Walls of old cities with their flags unfurled;
Peaks, headlands, ocean and its isles of fame—
And sun and moon and all that made me strong.

Let No Man . . .

Let no man carve upon my monument,
Thinking to honor what he loved of me,
When I shall rest: "He had no enemy"—
O not to this, believe me, was I sent;
Even as I labor with my own intent
For sun and stars and earth's security,
I get myself good haters—let them be:
Carve not this slander on my monument.

"Nay," but I seem to hear my friends protest,
Who, though for me still ready to combat,
So often are given to untimely jest:
"We, who have known the breed you're railing at
And found you most yourself when angriest,
Will spare you any pleasantry like that."

Men Say . . .

Men say, who heard him in the gardens read,
 "Quaint connoisseur of verse and jest and flower,
 And courtly and patient in the evil hour,
 This was a goodly gentleman indeed."
 But I, who kept the house and from his greed
 Hungered lean years on second-best and sour,
 And mixed the drink that gave him speech and power,
 Through all the soul that's left me break and bleed:

Not for myself; but for the city's just,—
 Each kindly heart that struggles in the face,
 Each honest hand that points, or voice that sings;
 For when a hard man's laid away in dust,
 Such praise is to the praisers their disgrace,
 And one more outrage to the higher things.

To an Elf [EDITH C——]

You elfin creature of these underwoods,
 Poised in a plat of moonlight on ethereal
 Pinions, beside my secret mountain-spring,
 Upon a rock, akimbo and imperial,
 You little Mischief, pert as any king,
 Are you some insect-spirit of the floods,
 Or is your quaint diaphanous material
 Some eery distillation of the mist,
 Or braid of tickling gossamers atwist?
 And can you weep or tell me anything?

Edgar Allan Poe [JANUARY 19, 1909]

Not for the tales, where magic voices rave
 In wizard night through haunted houses drear,
 Till the spell makes me half in love with fear;
 Not for the weirder art, the rhymèd stave
 Wailing of lunar wood, and wan sea-wave,
 And lamp, and ghostly bird, and bridal bier,

Lay I these verses, at this hundredth year,
Poe, on the marble of your wintry grave;

But for the unconquerable soul that pain
Nor poverty with forty stripes and odd,
Fire in the throat, nor fever in the brain,
Death in the house, nor calumny abroad,
Could torture from a faith, not held in vain,
With service unto Beauty—unto God.

A Psalm of the Prayerless

The Christ of Creeds has lost His fame,
His bells are silent on the mount,
No candles on the altar flame,
And empty the baptismal fount;
The wine we drank was moldered must,
The blessèd wafer but a crust.

Thou, too, fair Face, beyond all creeds,
Art sunk in ocean like a wraith,
A shadow cast by human needs,
Lost when we lost the light of faith—
The "Father" of this peopled shore
Becomes but idle metaphor.

Whilst that grim Somewhat of the mind,
The primal Cause, the cosmic One,
Though throned forever there behind,
Gleams colder than the polar sun,
To whom, across the eternal ice,
Man never burned a sacrifice.

And yet we plant and store our shelves,
And kiss the young and lead the old,
And die for dreams we dreamed ourselves,
Because the Laws within us hold;
And, closely read, those Laws immerse
Our being in the Universe.

Urbs Triumphans [SAN FRANCISCO]

"The Genius of that city is not dead."

I woke in sunlight, young and warm,
And vowed to give my dream a form.
I clove the cliff, I raised the stone,
With Orphic music of mine own,
Till soon the inviolable thought
To portico and palm was wrought.—
A marble city of the free,
With gardens at the western sea!
I made a house with lighted crypts
For mysteries and manuscripts;
I carved a stair to galleries,
And gave all men the brazen keys;
I gave to Seer and Sayer halls
With ancient wisdom on the walls;
I stored a Doric vault with gold,
As measure just for bought and sold;
I filled for watch and ward a dome
With civic lore of Athens, Rome;
I struck the lyre with unbound hair;
I fostered rites of praise and prayer.
And East across her mountains brought
Devices of her sturdy thought,
From rattling loom a flag with stars,
From flaming forges scimitars;
And West from island shore to this
Sent quaint perfumes and artifice,
In bamboo dwellings multiplied
By white-robed Buddhists almond-eyed.

But ere the morning moon's eclipse
In seas, beyond the homing ships,
Earth smote my beauty, and my towers
In flame were withered with my flowers;
And o'er the dread reverberations
Red rose the silent sun of nations.

Then kings on far pavilioned slopes
In starlight asked new horoscopes;
Then sullen priests, with hand to eyes,
Muttered the Sibyl's old replies;
Then islands and dominions proud
In litanies of terror prayed;
And hid within the fiery cloud,
I only was the Unafraid.

Could earth be one with my desire?—
Earth, sprung from zones of solar fire!
She plants a vale with fern and tree,
And sinks it down the sunless sea;
She hangs the crags with vine and branch,
And shatters with the avalanche;
She wreathes her brow, she rends her breast,
She knows no worst, she seeks no best.
She claimed the form, but the design
Was, is, and is forever mine!

Behold in Java and Ceylon
The silent ages slumber on.
Their jungles, where the tiger crawls
By sultry moonlit waterfalls,
Hide ruined palaces and halls—
Huge cities, dim, grotesque, and damp,
Where ebon door and ivory lamp
Had mocked the lightning and the rain
Ere Tyrian trader coasted Spain.
They perished by their soma bowls;
They left no hieroglyphs or scrolls;
Their names are lost, and legends tell
The earthquake smote them and they fell.

But in my larger towers to be
The bells will shout with brazen lips
To cities over land and sea
A jubilant apocalypse!

And o'er my gates shall stand the line,
By my imperial decree:
*"I am a Symbol and a Sign,
A Witness and a Prophecy."*

*Lincoln**

I

There runs a simple argument
That, with the power to give a great man birth,
The insight and the exaltation
To judge him at his splendid worth
Best proves the vigor of a continent,
The blood that pulses in a nation.

We call ourselves the militant and wise
Heirs of dominion, lords of enterprise;
And that's no craven faith whose works we name:
The prairies sown, the factories aflame,
The mountain mines, the battle-fleets that came
Victorious home from islands of sunrise,
The cities towering to the windy skies—
A new-world faith that is a world's new fame.

Yet we are wiser than we think we are,
Nor walk we by that iron faith alone:
God and the west wind and the morning star
And manhood still are more than steel or stone.
And among the proofs of what we do inherit
In the dominion of the spirit,
Through that material uproar, toil, and strife
Of our vast people's life,
There is a story, eloquent and low,
Waiting the consecrated scroll and pen,
More lovely, more momentous than we dream:
How, year by year, behind the blare and show,

* A talk given at the unveiling of the replica of Weinman's statue,
University Hill, Madison, Wisconsin, June 22, 1909.

Lincoln has prospered in the hearts of men;
And a great love compels me to the theme.

II

I stood among the watchers by the bed,
And caught the solemn cry of Stanton, when,
A statesman gifted with a prophet's ken,
Stanton looked up to God and said,
On the first moment the gaunt form lay dead,
"Now he belongs unto the ages!"—then,
Transfigured to a little child again,
Bowed in his hands that grim, defiant head.

III

I marked a people, hearing what had come,
Whisper, as if Death housed in every street,
And look in each other's faces and grow dumb;
While, with the Stars and Stripes for winding sheet,
And roses and lilies at his head and feet,
He crossed the valleys to the muffled drum.
And still the white-haired mothers tell
How knell of bell and tolling bell,
Onward and overland,
On from the ocean strand,
Over the misty ridges,
Over the towns and bridges,
Over the river ports,
Over the farms and forts,
Mingled their æry music, far and high,
With April sunset and the evening sky.

IV

Grief mellowed into love at Time's eclipse,
Our loftiest love from out our loftiest grief:
From him we have named the mountains and the ships,
We have named our children from the martyred chief;

And, whilst we write his works and words of state
For the proud archives of the Country's great,
How often it seems we like to linger best
Around the little things he did or said,
The quaint and kindly shift, the homespun jest,
Dear random memories of a father dead;
His image is in the cottage and the hall,
A tattered print perhaps, a bronze relief,
One calm and holy influence over all,
A household god that guards an old Belief;
And in a mood divine,
Elder than Christian psalm or pagan rite,
We have made his birthplace now the Nation's shrine,
Fencing the hut that bore him in the night,
As 'twere the mausoleum of a Line,
With granite colonnades and walls forever white.

v

And poets, walking in the open places,
By marsh, or meadow, or Atlantic seas,
Twined him with Nature in their harmonies—
Folk-hero of the last among the races,
As elemental as the rocks and trees;
One of the world's old legendary faces,
Moving amid Earth's unknown destinies.
To Lowell he became like Plutarch's men,
Yet worked in sweetest clay from out the breast
Of the unexhausted West;
In Whitman's nocturne at the twilight hush
He seems a spirit come to dwell again
With odor of lilac and star and hermit thrush;
And, though the goodly hills of song grow dim
Beyond the smoke and traffic of to-day,
The poets somehow found the ancient way
And reached the summits when they sang of him.

VI

The sculptors dropped their measuring rods,
Their cunning chisels from the gods,
From woman in her marble nakedness,
From what they carved of flowing veil or dress,
Perceiving something they might not contemn,
A majesty of unsolved loveliness,
Standing between the eternal sun and them.
And, in his gnarlèd face,
With shaggy brow and bearded base,
The corded hand, the length and reach of limb,
Their generous handicraft
Has proved how well they saw
No antic Nature's curious sport or whim
Who made him as she laughed,
But strict adjustment after subtlest law—
To finer sense a firm and ordered whole,
An output of a soul,
A frame, a visage for delight and awe,
Even were it not also witness unto Time
Of deeds sublime.
Thus, true of eye and hand,
The sculptors gave his statues to the land.

VII

One stands in Boston's crowded square,
Stern to rebuke and pitiful to save,
One moment of his labors it stands there,
And from its feet is rising up the slave;
One by Chicago's noisy highway stands,
As if pronouncing on a civic fate,
Seeming to view a people's outstretched hands,
Seeming to feel the armies at the gate.
And now . . . and here . . .
In the young summer of the hundredth year,

So beautiful and still,
The scholar (he who learns to wait
For meanings than the rest more clear)
Unveils upon the everlasting hill,
With everlasting sky around its head,
Between the woodland inland waters,
Fronting a domèd city spread
In yonder distance like a garden bed,
This mighty Presence for our sons and daughters,
That shows him not in what he wrought,
But in the lonely grandeur of that trust
Which made him patient, strong, and just—
Yet seated, forever out of reach of aught
Of olden battles and the dread debate,
Whatever thunder comes or tempest blows;
Watching some Planet off the shores of Thought,
Not parted from but still above the state,
In long supremacy of high repose.

I Feel Me Near to Some High Thing

I feel me near to some High Thing
That earth awaits from me,
But cannot find in all my journeying
What it may be.

I get no hint from hall or street,
From forest, hill, or plain,
Save now a sudden quickening of my feet,
Now some wild pain.

I only feel it should be done,
As Something great and true,
And that my hands could build it in the sun,
If I but knew.

x. AGATHA

The Crisis [BETROTHAL]

This solemn hour God takes from out all Time—
Time that built up the mountains and the main,
And brought embattled empires down the plain,
And raised the cities seen in every clime—
This solemn hour God takes from out all Time,
Though Time with mightier issues pregnant be
Forevermore, and gives this hour to me,
Wherein to prove my manhood at the prime.

And I walk on, even to the martial voice
Of strong musicians that have faced the foe;
And with me stars and troops of angels go,
And God is watching, ready to rejoice. . . .
And I walk on . . . to where the roads of Choice
Are broad and narrow . . . shall I falter? . . . No.

Alone You Passed

Alone you passed beyond the Golden Gate,
Toward the red Hesperus o'er the western seas
To broad-browed idols of the Japanese—
But their grim lips were silent where they sate;
Alone I sailed earth's other path of fate,
Out toward the morning star where Egypt is,
Where the Sphinx guards her bleak eternities—
But I returned, like you, forlorn and late;

Then wandering inland from each divided coast
Across the multitudinous continent,
Strangers by hill and stream without an aim,
We met even in the hour we doubted most,
And each in each achieved the great Event—
The oracle, the sacrificial flame.

O Loved and Lovely

O loved and lovely on the mountain crest,
O auburn hair the clouds are shining on,
White arms uplifted to the setting sun,
Prophetic eyes that see beyond the west,
O whispering voice, my tumult and my rest,
Star of the twilight next that burning one
Which yonder in heaven holds bright dominion,
Through song of mine shalt thou be manifest!

For from my wings thy fire hath purged the pain,
For on my eyes thy light hath poured the light,
And on my mouth is thine immortal kiss;
Nor can thy presence be bestowed in vain
On me, the Lyrists' eager acolyte,
That long hath prayed for such a task as this.

The Vaunt of Man

I

When I shall make my vaunt before the Lord,
I shall not name my thrift of knowledge won:
The wingèd urns unearthed in Babylon,
The Greek palimpsest wondrously restored,
Nor what of rock or plant in field and fiord
I brought from where the Scandian rivers run,
Nor my Uranian lore of moon and sun,
Nor deep-sea soundings with the lead and cord.

But I shall boast my cunning in Romance:
How, Heart-of-Woman, along a trail in Ind
I met thee footsore on thine ancient quest
And knew thy need with manhood's swiftest glance—
Thy solemn grief so long unmedicined,
The wound thy hand was hiding in thy breast.

II

Nor when I speak my boast before the King,
Shall I proclaim my deeds of song and sight,
My rainbow visions conjured out of night,
My island cities with ships of hope a-wing
Out in the oceans of imagining,
Nor forest hymns upon my mountain height,
Nor the loud pæans to the morning light
In rolling meters of my sea-singing.

But I shall boast how once, O Child of Earth,
Whilst thou wert weeping in the desert South,
I, passing that way with flowers and wine and bread,
Restored for immortality the mirth
Of those blue eyes and kissed thee on the mouth
With sudden hands of joy upon thy head.

III

O when I make my plea before our God,
I shall not boast my sufferance and pain,
The whirlwind snows that blinded on the plain,
The smoke I breathed, the lava fields I trod,
With head unhooded and burning feet unshod,
Nor fettered hours in Houses of Disdain
With anarch Ignorance and Custom Vain,
Nor strength achieved by bowing to the rod.

But I shall boast, O Bride forever bright,
Forever young (with blossoms from the glade,
The hill, the lake I crown thee mistress of),
Delight, delight and evermore delight,
The hearth I kindled and the boat I made,
And quiet years as minister of love.

IV

So when I make my boast before the Throne,
 I shall not mention what was mine of praise,
 The silver cup for swiftness in the race,
 Nor bossèd medals stamped with name mine own
 For Turk or Tartar in Palæstra thrown,
 Nor bells that pealed my battles in old days,
 Graved scrolls with civic seals, nor public bays
 For the deep thoughts I carved in bronze and stone.

But I shall name, O lyric Life, thy name;
 Show the proud tokens, the ring, the odorous hair,
 Love's fiery print upon my lips and eyes;
 And strip my bosom as 'twere a thing of fame,
 And say, "This glorious Lady slumbered there,
 And made these arms her earthly Paradise."

When Came the Moment

When came the moment of your life to me,
 After my evil years, I said: "At last
 Is service, peace, and splendor; I am saved
 In saving her." The times of summer flowers
 On hills beyond the city, and of stars
 By twilights on the memorable lake,
 The winter's reading, and the helpfulness
 In mutual old simplicities of life,
 Were ours by seasons, were they not?—And still
 We were two lovers to the end, despite
 The alien sounds forever on the stair,
 And older sorrows of a shadowy house
 To which a solemn duty bound us both. . . .
 Two lovers to the end . . . the awful end. . . .

My Defense

When Fate trod madly on my garden bed
 And took her from me in the early May,

Just as she tucked the living seeds away
 With those deft fingers, kneeling near the shed,
 'Twas not enough that I should see her dead
 And my house shattered; not enough—but they
 Who hate my sort found villain things to say
 And mantled me with slander where I bled.

But my defense, who saw and judged the whole,
 Because she loved my passionate sad soul
 And deeper purport of my larger aim,
 Spoke from those Places that the world denies—
 Those Incommensurables with sea and skies—
 “They cannot harm you: I am still the same.”

To the Evening Star

White star, beyond the houses and the hills,
 That beaconest a solemn all-is-well
 Across the twilight to the fates of men,
 From out the seeming Distance; lonely star,
 Companioning our uncompanied griefs,
 Till surges something of thy holy light,
 Some still suffusion of immortality,
 Through the hushed soul, and time and space no more,
 And the divisions of the grave no more
 Convince us into martyrdom: O star,
 Keep, keep the child with thee until I come. . . .

The Superscription

[FOR “THE VAUNT OF MAN” VOLUME, 1912]

White soul, too white for us who work with clay,
 Sweet mistress of the gentle flowers and birds,
 Harshly compelled to speak your loving words
 So long but to the subtle beasts of prey:
 I was your earthly husband for a day,
 Too strange a nature for an eye so blue;

And yet so honest was my love to you,
I gave you something ere you went away. . . .

I've set no stone upon the grave out there,
Whither in all my years I shall not go;
But, conquering pain, and pity, and despair,
I bind these leaves with solemn hands and slow:
My poems—all my sacred best of life—
Be yours forever, O my wife, my wife!

XI. FABLES

Wherein, by means of symbolisms conscious and unconscious, I defied pain with laughter, and propounded some sardonic opinions on the cowardice of personal enemies and on the stupidity of the human race.

Foreword

Well, here's the Book of Fables, done
Whilst I had neither star nor sun,
And little cause, good friends, to jest—
Except one cause, and *that* the best.
I will explain. Some folks averred
To one another, having heard
That I had gone to Æsoping:
"His grief is but a paltry sting,
Or else he'd have no heart for jokes."
This world is full of stupid folks:
We mop our eye, we bow our pate,
We squat, or we vociferate,
Or shuffle round with rueful faces,
Alone in amateurish cases,
When certain that by doing so
We'll get some luxury from woe.
Such amateurish cases are:
A broken leg, a family jar,
A house burned down, a jealous throb,
Or being fired from our job.
But in the major griefs and pains
Afflicting homo sapiens,
We lift our heads, our eyes are dry,
We stalk about, and we defy—
We laugh—we laugh! 'Tis no pretense:
Self-preservation and defense
It is indeed. So desperate
In this grim world is now our state
That but one tear were death and date.
A major case?—I still am dumb;
But let that pass: my time shall come! *

* "My time shall come": written in the late summer of 1911.

FABLES ADAPTED FROM ÆSOP

The Ass in the Lion's Skin

An Ass put on a Lion's skin and went
About the forest with much merriment,
Scaring the foolish beasts by brooks and rocks,
Till at the last he tried to scare the Fox.
But Reynard, hearing from beneath the mane
That raucous voice so petulant and vain,
Remarked, "O Ass, I too would run away,
But that I know your old familiar bray."

MORAL

That's just the way with asses, just the way.

The One-Eyed Doe

I sing a little tale of woe
About a gentle little Doe
That comes into my mind.
It had the habit of surprise,
Besides four legs, two ears, two eyes,
Of which the one was blind.

So it would always grazing be
Close to the cliff beside the sea,
Its good eye landward cast.
For thus it mused: "My danger lurks
In hounds' and hunters' evil works
And not in Ocean's vast."

But sorrow, sorrow! Boatmen came
By chance, and, taking certain aim,
Did shoot her from the sea;
And as she died, she sobbed and said:
"O I was fearfully misled,
And now I cease to be."

MORAL

The moral here is literary,
And yet I think it ought to carry:
Had Wordsworth sung this song,
It would have been less energetic,
But surely ten times more pathetic,
And fifty times as long.

The Boar and the Ass

A little Ass with little sense,
But plenty of impertinence,
Remarked with impish mockery
And ears that flapped consumedly,
Unto the Boar, the lord of Swine:
"Your humble servant, brother mine."
The solemn Boar, as somewhat nettled,
In equanimity unsettled,
With noble snout began to dip
To give the Ass's flank a rip,
But, stifling passion, satisfied
Resentment, as he thus replied:
"You spavined shank, you hide, you husk,
I will not foul my glorious tusk
By making such a creature bleed,
Though 'twere an easy feat indeed."

MORAL

True dignity will never bend
With its inferiors to contend.

The Wolf and the Lamb

A Wolf, encountering a wildered Lamb,
Astray and helpless, far from fold and dam,
Declared: "Sirrah, last year you baa-ed at me;
For this I think I will be eating thee."
"O no indeed," the Lamb began to mourn;
"Last year, believe me, Wolf, I wasn't born."
"You feed in pastures that belong to me;
For this, then, Lambkin, I'll be eating thee."
"O no indeed," the creature cried; "alas—
For up to now I've never tasted grass."
"But of my well you drink, and this shall be
Sufficient reason for my eating thee."
"O no indeed, I've drunk no water yet;
My mother's milk is all the drink I get."
Whereat the Wolf he seized and ate and said:
"But still I won't go supperless to bed."

MORAL

The tyrant ever finds his last excuse,
When logic fails him, in some private use.

The Sick Lion

A Lion, through infirmities
No longer fit his food to seize,
Lies down within his den and feigns
That death's about to end his pains.
The beasts come one by one to see,
Expressing heartfelt sympathy.
And Lion reaches forth a paw,
And tucks them well within his maw.
A Fox, who notes the trick, to save
His hams remains outside the cave,
Inquiring how he feels to-day.
"O fair to middling; but I pray,

Why won't you, Reynard, nearer walk
And here within sit down and talk?"
—"So many prints of feet I ken
That lead *into* your dusky den,
But none of any *out* again."

MORAL

Well armed is he against surprises
Who learns from other folks' demises.

The Bear and the Travelers

Two Travelers upon a mountain path
Were once confronted by a Bear in wrath;
The one he clambered up a tree with vim
And sat contentedly upon a limb;
And so the other dropped and held his breath,
Lying upon his paunch and feigning death.
The Bear came up and nosed about his head,
And (as a Bear will never touch the dead)
He snorted off. Then from the tree the other,
Descending nimbly, jested: "Well, my brother,
What was it he was whispering in your ear?"—
"Why, he advised me not to travel here
And

MORAL

on all travels to avoid the chum
Who will desert one when disasters come."

The Shepherd-Boy and the Wolf

A Shepherd-Boy beside a stream
"The Wolf, the Wolf," was used to scream,
And when the Villagers appeared,
He'd laugh and call them silly-eared.

A Wolf at last came down the steep—
"The Wolf, the Wolf,—my legs, my sheep."
The creature had a jolly feast,
Quite undisturbed, on boy and beast.

MORAL

For none believes the liar, forsooth
Even when the liar speaks the truth.

The Oxen and the Butchers

The Oxen gathered on a day,
Resolving how at once to slay
The Butchers—men whose trade to them
It seemed but natural to condemn.
When one, the chief in gravity,
Arose, a bold and bovine Nestor:
"Though these same Butchers," stated he,
"Us even unto death do pester,
They slaughter us with skilful knives
And little pain—our wretched lives
Would be more wretched with such satyrs
As less experienced operators,
Who'd gash and hack and choke our breath
And keep us half the day in dying—
And that would be a double death.
For surely there is no denying,
Though Butchers perished, 'tis our grief
That men will never lack for beef."

MORAL

This evil world is full of tricks,
And life itself's a pretty fix—
Our luck consists in clearing out
By what's the least protracted route.

The Fly and the Bald Man

Upon a Bald Man's shining crown
A wingèd fly alit:
With legs apart and evil neck bent down,
The Creature bit.

The Man, to slay the Insect, gave
Himself a slap in vain—
Whereat the Fly: "And art thou such a knave
As to disdain

"Thy body, temple of thy soul
That dwells, O Man, inside?
Or hast thou never practised self-control?"—
The Man replied:

"With my own self I'll make my peace,
Knowing my own intent;
And I'll repair ere long with cooling grease
This accident.

"But thou, but thou, pestiferous,
I still would gladly drub,
Impertinent, ill-favored little Cuss,
Beelzebub,

"Who vilely suckest human veins,—
Even though it bred
Immedicable, self-inflicted pains
To smite thee dead."

MORAL

This fellow's sorry fit of pique,
Alas, too plainly tells
How man prefers his vengeance for to wreak
Before all else.

The Crab and Its Mother

A Crab unto her progeny:
"Thou walkest so lop-sidedly;
A steady gait and straight ahead
Is more becoming and well-bred."
"But, Mother, show me, if you can,"
Replied the young Crustace-an.
The Mother's effort was an antic
Pedantic, frantic, unromantic,
A wriggling, wobbling, jerking, clawing,
With bulging eyes, and head see-sawing—
A work ill-fitted to inspire
Respect, affection, or desire.
The infant Crab replied distracted:
"O Mama, Mama, how you acted!"

MORAL I

Example is the only teacher
For man or crab or any creature.

MORAL II

Parents, avoid such exhibitions
Before your children of conditions
That mock your worthy expositions.

The Fowler and the Ring-Dove

A Fowler took his gun and went
Into the woods on shooting bent;
And on an oak limb up above
Among the leaves he spied a Dove.
He clapped his gun against his shoulder,
And set his foot upon a boulder;
But as his finger was about
To pull the trigger and let out
The lethal shot, an Adder which

He trod upon began to twitch.
It darted back and forth its head
And through his calf its poison shed.
In vain the Fowler dropped his gun;
And good Saint Patrick called upon;
In vain he took a sudden swig
From out a bottle brown and big.
The moon arose, the winds were sighing,—
The Fowler lay a-mortifying.

MORAL

O roam the woodland and the wild,
But do not shoot the birds, my Child;
For Mr. Audubon and others
Have told us that they be our brothers.
(And yet I wonder if the Snake
Was stinging for the Ring-Dove's sake.)

The Mouse, the Frog, and the Hawk

A Mouse, whose home had always been
Among the stubble and the green,
Conceived a friendship for a Frog,
Who lived within the pool and bog.
The sleek Amphibian one day
Enticed the foolish Mouse away;
And, with a string of water-cress,
His evil self he did address
To binding fast the Mouse's thigh
Unto his own upon the sly.
Then on the bank, a son of sin,
He croaked and dove jocosely in,
And down among the rushy roots
Methinks he squints and squats and scoots.
The hapless Mouse, as being tied
And never used to water, died;
And on the surface bobbed and floated,
With legs upturned and belly bloated.

A Hawk observed the morsel there,
And swooped and bore it off in air.
The frenzied Frog, as being tied
Unto the Mouse, he also died,
And added something to the feast
When Hawk had finished with the beast.

MORAL

Tie no one to you with a string,
And never do a wicked thing.

The Oaks and Jupiter

The Oaks with melancholy air
Complained to sovereign Jupiter:
"We bear the load of life in vain;
Of all the trees on hill or plain—
Birch or butternut or beech,
Cherry-tree or pear or peach,
Eucalyptus or allaxis—
We suffer most from hacks of axes."
"The cause," replied the king of gods,
"Is due to neither spites nor frauds,—
But lies within yourselves, my Oaks:
For were you not a boon to folks,
Above all woods, for posts and rails,
For roof-trees, handles, staves, and pails,
No man would come in leathern boots
With hacks of axes on your roots."

MORAL

Unusual gifts for doing good
May cost us dearer than we would.

The Partridge and the Fowler

A Fowler caught a Partridge; but
The Partridge begged him not to cut
His head asunder, screaming: "Pray,
Master, let me live my day!—
And for you I will entice
Many Partridges." "Thou thrice
Accursèd creature," said the man;
"Sizzle thou in baking pan!—
I've less scruple now, pardee,
In vigorously slaughtering thee,—
Who think'st to save thy neck at cost
Of thine own kin betrayed and lost."

MORAL

O Bird, most base and cowardly,
I wish I'd had a Hack at thee.

The Swan and the Goose

A rich man bought a Swan and Goose,—
That for song, and this for use.
It chanced his simple-minded cook
One night the Swan for Goose mistook.
But in the dark about to chop
The Swan in two above the crop,
He heard the lyric note and stayed
The action of the fatal blade.

MORAL

And thus we see a proper tune
Is sometimes very opportune.

The Boys and the Frogs

Some Boys did pelt the Frogs with stones
And banged them on the brains;
And laughed to hear the dying groans
Of Rana Pipiens.

Till one petitioned with a croak,
His head above the water:
"Stop, Boys,—for what's to you a joke,
To us, to us is slaughter."

MORAL

O Heedless Harry, Tom, and Dick,
O little Paul and Percy,
Renounce your murderous stone and stick,
And join a Band of Mercy.

The Wolf in Sheep's Clothing

Once on a time a Wolf, a vicious,
Decided 'twould be expeditious
To case himself inside the skin
That once a Sheep had wandered in.
Thus clad, he pastured on the wold,
Unmarked among the seely fold;
Thus clad, among the Sheep he sate
That night behind the wicker gate.
The Shepherd came with lantern dim,
And with his knife he slaughtered him,
Supposing him the Sheep that he'd
Intended for to dress and bleed
And take to market on the morrow.

MORAL

Seek a harm and find a sorrow.

The Laborer and the Snake

A Snake from out his hole beneath
The cottage porch upon the heath
Crawled up and bit the infant son,
Who died from what the Snake had done.
The furious father with his flail
Missed the head, and mashed the tail.
And afterwards, for fear the Snake
On him might lethal vengeance take,
Set down some bread beside the hole,
To pacify and to cajole.
The Serpent hissed: "Between us twain
Henceforth no peace can be, 'tis plain:
Whene'er we meet, we will remember—
You your Son and I my Member."

MORAL

It sometimes happens that a feud
Imperils Christian brotherhood.

The Lion in Love

A Lion to a Woodcutter:
"Your daughter, may I marry her?"
The father, loath and yet suspecting
He'd suffer violence by rejecting,
Agreed by contract with the clause
To draw his teeth and cut his claws—
To which the Lion gave assent
(Love blinding him to the intent).
When next the Beast a-wooing came,
As harmless as a cat and tame,
The Woodcutter he seized an axe
And gave him sundry sudden whacks.

MORAL

A lover, who to win a wife
Surrenders all he's got in life,
Deserves to lose—He's too romantic;
His lack of reason drives me frantic.

The Goat and the Goatherd

A Goatherd in a fit of scorn
Cracked with a stone a Nanny's horn.
Unskilled to mend with paste or plaster,
He begged her not to tell his master.
"You're quite as silly, sir, as violent—
The horn will speak, though I be silent."

MORAL

Man oft repents of what he did—
For wicked deeds cannot be hid.

The Eagle and the Arrow

A fallen Eagle, pierced along the heart,
Saw his own feathers on the fatal Dart.

MORAL

To our disasters we contribute part.

The Wolf and His Shadow

A Wolf, who roamed the mountain side,
Beheld his Shadow stretching wide,
Considerably magnified,
Because 'twas nearing eventide.
Then said the Wolf, the while he eyed
That shadow with increasing pride:
"Why thus should I in fear abide

Of lion's roar or lion's stride—
Could I not eat him hair and hide?"
Meanwhile the hungry Lion spied
This most complacent Wolf and tried
The matter out . . . the Wolf he died,
And dying, mournfully he cried:

MORAL

"Woe worth the fool self-satisfied."

The Old Man and Death

An aged Man, employed in cutting wood
And carrying faggots for a livelihood
To Corinth's market, being out of breath
And worn, sat down and called aloud on Death.
Death hastened at his summons down the road:
"Why callest me?" "That, lifting up my load,
Thou may'st replace it on my shoulders."

MORAL

I've

The same propensity to stay alive.

The Lark and the Farmer

A Lark, whose nest was in the field
Which soon a ripened crop would yield,
Instructed well her little brood,
As forth she flew in search of food,
To make report of every word
That in her absence might be heard.
When back she came, the Young Ones fell
To chirping madly, and pell-mell
To quiver round her: "Mama Lark,
O fetch us off before 'tis dark!
The Farmer said unto his son:
'To-morrow early up and run

To all the *neighbors* of the plain,
 That they may help us reap the grain.' "
 The old Lark twittered: "Cease your sorrow;
 The grain will not be reaped to-morrow."
 Next day when back she flew again,
 The Young Ones chirped a like refrain:
 "O Mama Lark, O Mama Lark,
 O fetch us off before 'tis dark!
 The Farmer said unto his son:
 'Of all our neighbors never one
 It seems can be depended on.
 To-morrow early up and run
 To all our *cousins* of the plain
 That they may help us reap the grain.' "
 The old Lark twittered: "Cease your sorrow;
 The grain will not be reaped to-morrow."
 Next day when back she flew again,
 The Young Ones chirped a like refrain:
 "O Mama Lark, O Mama Lark,
 O fetch us off before 'tis dark!
 The Farmer said unto his son:
 'With *kin* and *neighbors* I am done.
 To-morrow early up and bring
 Two sickles and the binding string;
 And *we together* will proceed
 To reap the grain.' " The Old Lark: "We'd
 Do well to quit this nest indeed."

MORAL

When men at last are forced by fate
 To work, they won't procrastinate.

The Fox and the Bramble

A Fox, who on the cliffs would gambol,
 Once fell and caught upon a Bramble,
 And having pricked and torn his soles,

He roared indignant rigmaroles:
"Thou bush of a Satanic seed
That makest me, the Fox, to bleed!"
The Bramble patiently replied:
"Were't not for me, you'd soon have died
Down there below the mountain-side."

MORAL

When remedies are rather drastic,
We do not wax enthusiastic.

The Fox and the Hedgehog

A Fox who swam across a torrent
Was swept along by wave and current
Into a dank and dark ravine,
Where long he lay, until gangrene
Set in and made him most unclean
And wretched. For upon the rocks
He'd gotten scratches, bruises, knocks.
Besides, the vile retreat was warm.
So, soon there settled down a swarm
Of sucking flies upon the Fox.
The Hedgehog came commiserating,
In kindly words his purpose stating:
"I'll drive the horrid flies away."
"No, gentle Hedgehog, let them stay.
For these same flies are full of gore,
So full they can't suck any more.
They sting me little. I am freighted
At present with the satiated.
But should they leave, their hungry kin
Would come, and stick their suckers in,
And drink the blood that yet remains."

MORAL

In times of trouble use your brains.

The Gnat and the Lion

A Gnat unto a Lion spoke:
"Your boasted strength is but a joke—
You bite with teeth, you scratch with nails
Like any woman when she rails."
And sounding then his horn, he goes
Directly to the Lion's nose,
Where all Zoologists declare
Is neither bristle, down, nor hair—
A tender spot. And here he stings.
The frenzied Lion madly flings
His paws about his face, and bleeds
From his own misdirected deeds.
The Gnat he buzzes forth a pæan
And soars into the empyrean.
But shortly after, being tangled
In cobwebs, he was mauled and mangled;
And murmured: "What a fate is *my* own!
Here I, who put to flight a Lion,
Must perish by a wretched Spider
And find a petty grave inside her."

MORAL

The greatest danger often lies
In little things that we despise.

The Tunny and the Dolphin

A Tunny, once by Dolphin rude
Around and round the bay pursued,
Was flung by wind and wave and left
To gasp within a barren cleft.
With glassy eye he chanced to light
On Dolphin in the self-same plight.

"I die," he moaned, "and yet with joy—
For you die with me too, my boy."

MORAL

Revenge is sweet, aye even in death—
That's what the heathen Tunny saith.
Perhaps 'tis true, perhaps 'tis funny,
And still 'twas wicked of the Tunny.
Though pard'ning the untutored fish,
I'd never harbor such a wish.

The Fox and the Crane

A Fox, with reprobate design,
Invited home a Crane to dine,
And getting out a dish of stone,
The shallowest he chanced to own,
Poured into it a mess of soup.
The long-necked Crane began to stoop;
But every mouthful from his bill
Would bubble, sputter off, and spill;
At which the Fox, who knew a jest,
Laughed with complacency and zest.
The Crane, who wandered hungry home,
Thereafter asked the Fox to come,
And set a flagon on the ground
With narrow neck and bowl profound;
And easily inserting then
His head, he drank and drank again.
The Fox, unable to compete,
Admitted the retort was neat.

MORAL

You may be smart, but when you're through,
Others may be as smart as you.

The Frogs Who Desired a King

The Frogs, lamenting that they had no king,
Sent their ambassadors to mighty Zeus,
Beseeching. The Olympian God, who marked
Their green simplicity, in jest cast down
A ponderous log splashing into the lake.
The Frogs in terror hid their heads afar
Deep in the shadowy waters mid the roots
Of salallows and of flags. But when once more
The billows were composed and that great log
Lay motionless, they did despise their fears,
And swam about, or sat thereon asquat,
Until they came to feel the indignant blush
At such a lumpish sovereign, and sent
A second embassy to mighty Zeus.
The Olympian God appointed them an Eel,
For potentate. But when they saw how sleek,
How fat, how empty of all policy,
His Eelship was, they were aggrieved again
And sent again an embassy to Zeus:
The Olympian, ruffled from the Olympian calm
By foolish plaint reiterated, sent
In wrath the Heron of the stalking thighs
And long swift bill. And day by fatal day
This new king, like the King of Terrors, preyed
Upon the congregation of the Frogs,
Until the croaking in that ancient lake
Did cease forever, both at rising sun
And when the first star lies above the hill.

MORAL

O Mortals, O unhappy humankind,
Complain not overmuch unto the Gods.

The Ass and the Lap-Dog

An Ass observed his master's pet,
The Lap-Dog, and began to fret:
"I tread the mill to grind the grain;
I drag the plow, the log, the wain;
I feed on water, hay, and oats;
I sleep in stall among the goats—
While he, he rolls upon his back,
Or paws a tit-bit in a sack,
Or leaping on his master's knee
Snaps a sugar-plum in glee;
He laps a spoon of Chian wine;
He takes his naps on cushions fine—
Besides, I hate his silken ears."
Whereat the Ass his own he rears,
In sudden hope these things to alter:
He breaks away from cord and halter;
Into his master's house he reels
With fawning neck and frisking heels,
And smashes tables, dishes, chairs,
And kicks the baby up the stairs.
And, mindful of the poodle's trick,
He takes his Master unawares
And gives his cheek a whacking lick,
His fore-hoofs on the shoulder laid.
The Serfs, by hubbub strange dismayed,
Rush in, and bang with stones and staves,
Till back into the barn he raves.
And after he has had a chance
To think it over, thus he pants:

MORAL

"O honest toil should never itch
To imitate the idle rich."

ORIGINAL FABLES

The Bear and the Owl

A famished Bear, whose foot was clenched
Within a murderous engine, wrenched
And bounced about in fright and pain
Around the tree that held the chain,
Emitting many a hideous howl.
His state was noticed by an Owl,
Who, perched above him fat and free,
Philosophized from out the tree:
"Of what avail this fuss and noise?—
The thing you need, my Bear, is poise."

MORAL

Such counsels are most sage, we know—
But often how malapropos!

The Lion in Pain

A Lion in lands of old Osiris,
In the solemn reign of Cyrus,*
Splashing midst the Nile's papyrus,
Got a dose of Adder's virus
Which inflamed his either iris,
So that round the tomb of Chéops
He emitted two or thrée yawps.

MORAL

Universe of pain and yelling!—
What's the use of *our* rebelling?

* But if you rise and say: "By Isis,
'Twas in the reign of good Cambyzes,
Or that of Seti or Ramesis"—
It won't affect the moral thesis.

The Cow and the Ostrich

A Cow with anthrax and the rickets,
Forlornly grazing in the thickets,
Tears off and swallows at a gulp
A leaf-hid hornets' nest of pulp.
The hot-feet creatures they explore
With angry haste her stomachs four,
And render life to that same cow
A fourfold sadder problem now.
An Ostrich, with long whiskered neck,
Begins upon her ear to peck,
And chides her for her melancholy:

MORAL

"The trouble's *in yourself*, girl, wholly."

The Duck and the Nightingale

An ancient Duck, complacent, fat,
Whose miserable habitat
Had been the stagnant pool behind
The barnyard of Bœotian hind,—
Save when she waddled by the fence
Among the roosters and the hens,
To snap with bony bill at corn
Her owner scattered every morn,
Or when within the crib she sate
To hatch her eggs and meditate,—
Began to make some slight pretense
To wisdom and experience.
She heard at dark a Nightingale
At no great distance down the dale—
The wingèd Nightingale who'd flown
In every sky, in every zone,
And sung while moon or morning star
Descended over hills afar—
And thus the Dame began to quack:

"O Nightingale, you'll surely crack
 That voice of yours, unless your soul
 Can learn a little self-control;
 Try settling down and doing good,
 And earn a sober livelihood."

MORAL

Conceited ignorance with ease
 Pronounces its banalities.

*The Nightingale, the Prairie Dogs, the Owls, and
 the Snakes*

A Nightingale from Athens, where
 Promethean chorus filled the air,
 And temples, statues, gods, looked down
 On heroes, bards, and sages there,
 Once came (for reasons hid from me)
 Across the irrevocable sea
 And dwelt in flat and sordid Town
 Of Prairie Dogs, and Snakes, and Owls,
 The name whereof was Gossipville.
 The Owls, the Prairie Dogs, the Snakes
 Began with fang and jaw and bill:
 "That Creature's surely no great shakes—
 The stupidest of all the Fowls
 Of Sea, or Air, or Plains, or Lakes!—
 Just see the way she soars a-wing,
 Just hear the way she tries to sing,
 As if she owned the sky and moon—
 She's crazy, or she will be soon."

MORAL

Alas for one who giveth vent
 To native genius, native bent,
 Within the wrong environment!

The Ephemeris

Some people love their souls to ease
By thinking of the chimpanzees,
Of boa-constrictors and such cusses,
Or oblong hippopotamuses,
Of whales or crocodiles or gnus,
Giraffes and cows and caribous,
Or (if they have a turn for fun)
Of dinosaur or mastodon,
And pterodactyl and those classic
Monsters of the old Jurassic.
'Twas Asshur-bani-pal who said,
"Men's tastes will differ till they're dead."
You all recall how Aristotle
Preferred the fish that's known as cuttle,
While the great sculptor Scopas says,
"My choice shall be octopuses."
And Poggio Bracciolini flew
Into a passion when they slew
The egg his favorite emu
Had laid with cackle of alarum
Behind Liber Facetiarum.
Some people love such beasts as these;
But I—without apologies—
I love the Ephemerides.
And having now admitted this,
I'll mention an Ephemeris
That one bright summer morn I spied
When sitting by Mendota's side.
A half-transparent drop of jelly,
With filaments upon its belly,
It skimmed along the surface lightly,
Nor plunged beneath it reconditely,
Like some more bold investigator—
For instance, loon or alligator—
And then 'twould spread its wings and fare—
A-going up, child, in the air,
It knew not how, it cared not where,

Till it collapsed, a bug, a bubble—
 Not having caused me any trouble,
 And certainly not having done
 The slightest good beneath the sun.
 Why do I love such bugs as these
 Sportive Ephemerides?—
 Because I like to see them frolic?—
 O no; because:

MORAL

They're so symbolic!

The Man and the Squirrels

A queer suburban Gentleman
 Was strolling with a palm-leaf fan,
 With philosophic step and slow,
 And pate a-nodding to and fro,
 Around his leafy bungalow.
 He marked the skipping Squirrels pause
 Upon their haunches with their paws
 Against their bosoms, each with head
 Atilt and bowed. And then he said:
 "I think I can explain the cause.
 All men perceive how great I am,
 And even the Squirrels here salaam;
 And could they speak, they wouldn't fail
 To add, 'O gracious Master, hail.'"
 Whereat he tossed unto the dumb
 A largesse of a nut and crumb.

MORAL I

O blest is he who can construe
 Whatever other people do,
 To suit his pride and point of view.

MORAL II

And blest is he whose self-conceit
 Yet gives the hungry things to eat.

The Two Dogs and the Peaceful Man

One day a Bull-Dog and his Wife
Fell to it in domestic strife
And gave some lively exhibitions
Of woeful marital conditions.
It chanced the Peaceful Man did sally
That moment down along the alley
And in the interests of remating
Began at once expostulating;
And getting each one by the scruff,
The Peaceful Man was rather gruff.
The Dogs, at this intrusion nettled,
Forthwith their differences settled,
A common purpose now controlling.
The Peaceful Man went raving, rolling—
With little heart to dilly-dally,
And left two coat-tails in the alley.
(And when one's robbed of raiment thusly
He runneth rather ludi-crous-ly.)

MORAL

Avoid domestic interference,
For it may ruin your appearance.

The Corpuscle and the Phagocyte and the Streptococcus

A Corpuscle began to fight
Absurdly with a Phagocyte:
"Indeed," he said, "I'm round and red,
And keep a man from falling dead.
I give him brains and nerve and muscle,"
Remarked the little red Corpuscle.
The Phagocyte: "And I am white,
And but for me you'd perish quite;
I go a-floating round the serum,
And when I spy the bugs I queer 'em;

You owe your work, your freedom, joy
 To me, the Phagocyte, my boy."
 But then a stalwart Streptococcus—
 Whose sterner functions needn't shock us—
 Seeing his foe was occupied
 With learned questions on the side,
 Swooped down and bit him till he died.
 And then the red Corpuscle cried:
 "Nature appoints, as well she should,
 To each his task—and each is good;
 Even though the Streptococcus be
 At last the best of all the three."

MORAL

The wretched Corpuscle has stated
 The moral—which, if syndicated
 And widely pondered, might prevent
 Our present social discontent.

The Parrot

A Parrot, shipped across the sea
 From Africa when young was he,
 Became a lonely widow's pet.
 The cage was by the window set;
 And in the sun the passers-by
 Could see the opal-jeweled eye,
 The scarlet tail, the ebon beak
 Thick-set against a whitish cheek,
 And that magnificence of gray
 On wing and back and breast, and they
 Remarked, "It is a splendid dream,
 A most successful color scheme.
 O Psittacus erithacus,
 We're glad to have you here with us."
 The widow, both from sense of duty
 And natural pride, baptized him "Beauty."
 I will not dwell on Beauty's feats:

The peanuts how he cracks and eats,
A-perch and holding in his claw,
Then gargling them into his maw
With lifted head, beside the cup,
The widow's always filling up—
The way he waddles round the floor
When mistress opes his cage's door—
The words he speaks, so shrill and mystic,
And preternatur'ly linguistic—
I will not mention, for my aim
Is to expound his fateful name.

Ere many moons, there came o'er him
An itching in his every limb—
But whether caused by frequent bites
Of horrid little parasites,
Or by the harsh New England climate
(That ruins many a lusty Primate,
And hence might possibly nonplus
A tender, an oviparous,
A tropic bird), or by some particles
In wretchedly digested articles,
We have slight reason to suspect.
At any rate, he clawed and pecked
With all his passion, intellect,
And sinews of his bill and foot,
Upon his feathers to the root.
Now Beauty's tail was but a stump
That ill-concealed a tragic rump,
Now Beauty's wing-bones both were bare,
And ghastly purple was the skin
That held his bulging gullet in,
And in his eye a vacant stare;
And, as his remnants there he sunned,
Men saw that he was moribund.

MORAL

Don't call your bird or offspring by
A name his future may belie.

The Poodle and the Pendulum

A Poodle, wistful-eyed and glum,
Sat looking at a Pendulum,
That with a steady tick and tock,
Before the wall, beneath the clock,
Swang back and forth its brazen disk.
The Poodle gave his tail a whisk.
A sudden thought had crossed his brain:
"What once it did, it does again,
Again, again, again, again."
The Poodle's head, with both his eyes
And both his ears of goodly size,
Began to nod from right to left
As if of every sense bereft,
With a rhythmic motion mocking
Both the ticking and the tocking.
The Pendulum had first surprised him—
But now 't had surely hypnotized him.
With every tick and every nod
(So odd, so odd, so odd, so odd)
He gave a sudden little yelp;
But no one came to hold or help—
Or whistle, or provide a bone,
Or snap a finger, throw a stone,
Or do a thing upon the lists
Prescribed by psycho-therapists,
When Poodles or when Men get notions
From neurasthenical emotions.
And, since no Poodle can sustain
Existence on this mortal plain
Long by only yelps and nods,
He passed unto the Poodle-Gods.
The Pendulum observed his jerk,
But kept unflustered at its work.

MORAL

Don't get to looking at devices
That tend to cause a mental crisis,

The Cat, the Raven, and the Public

A Cat and Raven quarreled once.
The Cat called Raven coward, dunce,
Lobster, blatherskite, poltroon,
Blackguard, scullion, and coon,
Hatchet-face and scrawny pate,
And other names I must not state.
And ere the Raven could reply,
The Cat had clawed it in the eye;
And ere the Raven had upsprung,
The Cat had bitten off its tongue.
The Public, ignorant of what
A handicap the Bird had got,
Admired its passive reticence
And said, "What dignity, what sense,
What lofty self-control! This Raven
Deigns not to answer such a craven.
Yes, silence is the wise retort—
It makes your foe feel like a wart."

MORAL

It's often nothing of the sort!

XII. DE RERUM NATURA

I complete the translation of Lucretius I had begun for Agatha, and my mother completes the typing Agatha had begun for me.

Lucretius

If to have paced within thy House of Thought
Among thy Mountains, from its windowed wings
Surveying dominions of the Law-of-Things
As into cloud, and star, and tempest wrought,
And trees, and gods, and cities,—if to have caught
Thy splendor, and thy pathos, and thy song
(Thy hand upon my shoulder, Master, long
From room to æry room) avail me aught,

Then not without some scope of thy old truth,
Then not without some ring of thy old worth,
My sturdy voice of still unconquered youth
Hath in an unknown tongue reported thee
Unto a Continent of thy dear Earth . . .
To thee unknown, beyond an unknown sea.

Indian Summer *

*(O Earth-and-Autumn of the Setting Sun,
She is not by, to know my task is done!)*

In the brown grasses slanting with the wind,
Lone as a lad whose dog's no longer near,
Lone as a mother whose only child has sinned,
Lone on the loved hill . . . and below me here
The thistle-down in tremulous atmosphere
Along red clusters of the sumach streams;
The shriveled stalks of goldenrod are sere,
And crisp and white their flashing old racemes.
(. . . forever . . . forever . . . forever . . .)
This is the lonely season of the year,
This is the season of our lonely dreams.

* This lyric concludes the narrative poem *Two Lives*; but, as it was originally printed separately and is in several anthologies, friends have said it belongs too in the present volume.

*(O Earth-and-Autumn of the Setting Sun,
She is not by, to know my task is done!)*

The corn-shocks westward on the stubble plain
Show like an Indian village of dead days;
The long smoke trails behind the crawling train,
And floats atop the distant woods ablaze
With orange, crimson, purple. The low haze
Dims the scarped bluffs above the inland sea,
Whose wide and slaty waters in cold glaze
Await yon full-moon of the night-to-be.
(. . . far . . . and far . . . and far . . .)
These are the solemn horizons of man's ways,
These the horizons of solemn thought to me.

*(O Earth-and-Autumn of the Setting Sun,
She is not by, to know my task is done!)*

And this the hill she visited, as friend;
And this the hill she lingered on, as bride—
Down in the yellow valley is the end.
They laid her . . . in no evening Autumn tide . . .
Under fresh flowers of that May morn, beside
The queens and cave-women of ancient earth . . .
This is the hill . . . and over my city's towers,
Across the world from sunset, yonder in air,
Shines, through its scaffoldings, a civic dome
Of piled masonry, which shall be ours
To give, completed, to our children there . . .
And yonder far roof of my abandoned home
Shall house new laughter. . . . Yet I tried . . . I tried . . .
And, ever wistful of the doom to come,
I built her many a fire for love . . . for mirth . . .
(When snows were falling on our oaks outside,
Dear, many a winter fire upon the hearth) . . .
(. . . farewell . . . farewell . . . farewell . . .)
We dare not think too long on those who died,
While still so many yet must come to birth.

XIII. UNPUBLISHED LEAVES

From the MS of TWO LIVES. TWO LIVES was published in its definitive form in 1925. The many manuscript-stanzas of 1913 which were omitted in 1925 (as they had already been from the private printing of 1922) were omitted as embarrassing the concentration, mood, and rhythm of the story as a whole. Those here published, however, may interest readers familiar with the poem and possibly offer other readers some values for whatever of human life they suggest in themselves. They make (in contrast to the narrative poem TWO LIVES) merely a sonnet-sequence, with the background of events in the shadows . . . the insanity and suicide of the wife . . . the grief and calumny for the husband . . . all in this contemporary prosperous America of ours. They first appeared in The American Caravan for 1927.

Adventurers . . . [A PROEM]

Adventurers, from voyagings returned,
Whether beyond Antarctic Erebus,
Whether through Congo's forests back to us,
Tell what of wild and wondrous things they learned,
What blizzards blinded, or what fevers burned,
And how, when almost perishing afar
(Now sound again, except a crutch or scar),
For home and song ineffably they yearned.
We read their books, with maps in blues and reds,
And landscapes pictured under alien suns,
Or under sultry moon or frosty star;
Then, studying their portraits, bearded heads,
Thrill into words: "O these the mighty ones,
These the strong heroes,"—as indeed they are.

Adventurer, from voyagings which passed
Beyond earth's continents, whilst things befell
Which none who've met before e'er lived to tell,
And I, it seems: the first, perhaps the last.
You shall not see my portrait, and my name
You must forget; but, if you read my book,
Though unadorned, you'll say (by pause or look):
"Man is still man, even when without his fame."
You need not say "a hero." . . . Yet regard
This tale at least in one respect like theirs:
That, urged like them, by what of high and hard
I found in awful tracts of Otherwheres,
I made my notes with an Explorer's pen,
And, coming home, dared write them out for men.

Comment *

'Tis no self-pity, with an "O-how-long,"
 'Tis no self-love, with "yet-I-mastered-fate,"
 That rivets that stanza to the iron gate
 Whereby ye enter this demesne of song.
 Here as I open the black bolts and strong,
 Whilst first ye look upon this new estate
 Of the still-living Muse, read once again
 That scroll: brief record of my strife with Pain
 In years before. Thus, when ye meet his face
 Herein, hereafter,—more wrinkled, leathern, grim,—
 Meet Pain more fierce with many-spikèd mace,
 His body sprouting many a strange new limb,—
 Ye'll know with what a desperate embrace
 'Twas mine a second time to strive with him. . . .

A second time with what a weary back,
 And scarred, bent shoulder; for the first had been
 A strife to me so memorably keen,
 That now I said, "No more can Pain attack
 With such a might, and now I know his worst."
 Yet though still weak from battles unforget,
 With tongue still sanded from old fear and thirst,
 I hoped; for hope was in this inland spot,
 Twin of its inland beauty. So I wrote
 My friend (my friend who knew, from talks together
 In sea-board cities, through what world of weather
 I'd kept for years my little bark afloat):
 "Rejoice with me; at last the tempests cease;
 I've come to land; I've found my work, my peace."

* On the stanza of *Two Lives*, beginning "I came from years already grim . . . with grueling adventures." Part I, II.

*Let the Past Die **

Friends tell me (friends in life and books well read):

"Let your Past die with all its grief and riot."

Let the Past die!—The past is never dead!

Not at high noon! Not in the starry quiet!

My Past is gesturing in this limp you pity,

And whitens in this scar against the blast,

And not a tree, a book, a song, a city,

But has to-day its meaning from my Past.

There is, good friends, scant wisdom in this "letting";

I *am* my past so long as I am I;

And in a brave reshaping, not forgetting,

Is my one hope and action not to die:

The Past that might have killed me if it could

I sternly mold to art and hardihood.

* * *

Heirs

When ye began, ere yet her flesh was cold,

To rifle chest and drawer, and bag for thrift

Each chased goblet and each jeweled gift,

Think ye I cared for what I lost in gold?

When ye began, ere yet her flesh was cold,

To smirch, with desperate slander black and swift,

The man of grief whom ye had cast adrift,

Think ye I cared for my good name of old?—

How could ye, could ye, ye whom the dear dead

Had loved so long the dearest, next to one

Who planted vines with her and shared her bed

(Bed in the windowed moonlight, vines in sun),

So mock the memory of that sacred head

And all the gentle deeds that she had done.

* * *

* Almost the latest, as to time of composition, of the poems in this volume—written (with the fifth poem in this section) in 1925 when *Two Lives* was on the press.

When Love's dear relics were exposed to view
 On court-house table and bossed with our state-seal,
 Intestate, with the sire's intestate too,
 The Civil Law that guards our commonweal
 Decided all, like Solomon deciding
 Between the women,—rather, *not* as he;
 For *his* decision reckoned the Abiding,
 And followed from his cunning sympathy
 With the heart's ownership. Who once did ask
 Of me heart's ownership?—Who ever said,
 "Has this or that some touch of your dear dead
 Whereby 'tis yours?"—The law fulfilled its task
 (Mistake me not, it did): much can be done,
 When heirs are reckless of the other one,

Done strictly after law. . . . And I demurred
 But once, once only. O the foolish aim,
 The dazed boy-impulse of my honest word
 Protesting!—Friends (I mean in fact, not name),
 Can you conceive me, when I here confess
 I spoke, O not to gain myself a jot,
 A tittle, of the cursèd golden pot,
 But as defender of her defenselessness . . .
 As still the guardian of her right—a fool,
 Whose eyes, though they had seen the coffin hid,
 Whose ears, though they had heard the sod on lid,
 Still saw, still heard her . . . as a child from school,
 Who feels its own dead mother on the stair,
 And sets her place at table and her chair.

And now three years have passed; and I, for one
 Who walked in tattered shoes from hill to coast
 Long years in youth, with friends a comic toast
 At Grub-Street banquets, I the ragged son
 Of pauper Johnson, brother of Chatterton,
 Am now, despite whatever the law withdrew,
 Still "comfortably fixed," with Stocks (a few)
 And Mortgages (still ripening in the sun

Of Six Per Cent). . . . Yes, "comfortably fixed,"
 As say my messmates at the Club.—And she,
 With whom alone it would have been to me
 Some comfort, now irrevocably mixed
 With Earth, the Bosomer!—How often, friends,
 Think you, I reckon up my dividends?

If Ever This Book . . .

If ever this book * (as Art from Thought and Sorrow)
 Shall lie for sale (with Dante) in the shops,
 Public (like chimes in spires) to fools and fops,
 Then I must front new martyrdoms to-morrow;
 Old tongues will shout: "Aside from shameless lies,
 You've thieved the hearth-fire from our household gods,
 Outraging private fates and sacred ties." . . .
 And those same tongues (awhile) shall have the odds . . .
 Yet is the story mine . . . because the pain . . .
 Was mine . . . the mastery of pain was mine . . .
 And mine the shaping instinct and endeavor:
 This were Art's right of eminent domain,
 Even had that House itself, on seal and line,
 Not canceled the ties . . . all ties . . . with me . . . forever.

But Ye, That Faction . . .

But ye, that faction of our citizens
 Who in my manhood's grief upon me spat,
 O ye whose heart-of-snake and brain-of-gnat,
 Like the brief offspring of the pools or fens,
 Spawned the green speech wherewith ye hoped to kill
 Or exile me, what time I lifted eyes
 From bride-in-coffin to the vacant skies
 Domèd above this city memorable;
 Ye cruel ladies with the scarlet tongue,
 Ye cruel gentlemen with brazen tooth,
 Ye shamers of the city whence ye sprung,

* *Two Lives.*

This city of sunlight and immortal truth,
 Ye too shall find your good (if good it be)—
 To be remembered in the world with me.

Portrait-Bust

Now Slander's argument had climbed the Hill,
 And got good welcome from my Campus Chief:
 A gentleman, who, carved in high-relief
 By some keen sculptor of defiant skill,
 Would show the small eyes of a cynic will,
 And mouth well-poised for wine and garnished beef,
 And beard (well-cropped van Dyke) to stroke in grief—
 When grief might serve his turn with Madame Thrill
 Or Bishop Cant. Hence I was not for him,
 Nor he for me. Yet was it not most black,
 To nurse advantage thus, Professor Trim,
 For cunning stab upon a broken back? . . .
 You've quit our halls: and meantime I discuss
 With point "Prometheus Bound" of Æschylus.

* * *

Ill by My Cottage . . .

Ill, by my cottage, pacing to and fro,
 Unstrung and haunted, the wreckage of my years
 Wrestling with horrible obsessions, fears
 And melancholias—thus he found me; so
 He thus began: "Poseur and coward, know
 I'm the true friend to make a man of you;
 You would be thought a genius, being blue,
 And crave for coddling."—"O for God's sake, O" . . .
 I shrieked. . . . "Come, come, sir, look me in the eye"
 (Magniloquently pounding with his cane);
 "Each friend of yours now thinks the same as I"
 (This, as it proved, was O the cruel lie!) . . .
 I gripped his arm, in agony of pain—
 In agony as one about to die.

"Remember what I've suffered—the dead wife,
The slander"—"Well, that's months ago, old top"
(His very words). "Buffoon, blasphemer, stop!
Stop, stop! Or it will cost you yet your life."
Then, in collapse, I stumbled up the path,
He after me (still aiming to restore);
My white-haired father helped me through the door,
His gentle eyes aflame with solemn wrath,
That cowed him into flight. . . . The harm was done . . .
The neighbors came . . . the bed prepared . . . the shade
Drawn to the sill . . . to take once more the sun
Away from me . . . afraid . . . afraid . . . afraid . . .
In horror of the very pillow where
I burrowed in despair . . . despair . . . despair.

I waive the months thereafter. Take a hint,
All people: If some roving yokel ran
Across a cripple binding to a splint
(Some roadside makeshift, cornstalk or rattan)
His shattered leg-bone, and thereby began
To tear it off by pounding with a flint,
And wrapped the wound in thistle-leaves for lint,
Were he indeed the good Samaritan?
Would we not hale him into court, insane
Or brute? But monstrosly at large there plod,
Assuming a licence from all-seeing God,
The yokels, lighting on the crippled brain,—
Or, since these fiercer wounds don't bleed with blood,
Think you they're not tenfold the wounds of pain?

The Phobiac *

What sonneteer, culling his rhymes to twist
Chaplets for love or death, would not draw back,
Outraged that I besing the Phobiac—
And "bizarre theme, and sanctioned by no list

* These verses were written some fifteen years ago. For a full and scientific treatment of such psychic phenomena, see my recent study (in prose), *The Locomotive-God*.

Of themes yet indexed by anthologist,"
Aver reviewers. And my friends: "You lack
A just reserve; don't empty out the sack
Of private ails, self-pitying egotist."
Three brief replies: the form my message takes
Grows not from mode but from my nature's need,
And what most haunts and hounds the artist makes
That artist's theme—though lip and tongue should bleed.—
As for a private ail—think you I pen
A diary?—I who am a thousand men?

The Phobic shapes of that one Terror come
Up from the underworld of mind: wild thought
Succeeding thought,—yet with fierce cunning wrought,
Self-wrought of one inveterate mother: some
Will harry when I hear a bell or drum,
Some with the thunder or the dark, but known
The longest those that grip me when alone
On heath, or hill, or highway, pale and dumb.
And Reason, still unshaken from her place,
And Senses, still as clear as moon or sky,
And Will and Strength of arm and foot and face,
Observe the Thing—and stand all helpless by!
And if I strive to jest It off, my laugh
Sounds like a craven cynic's epitaph.

And yet so alien that Mood (abhorred
By all my best of man), in earlier days
(Before we'd tracked the mind from maze to maze
Down to its dark abysses), priest or lord
Would verily have cloven me with a sword
Or whipped me to the dusty wastes, as one
Possessed by demons,—fatal, foul, undone—
Or bound me in a cavern with a cord.
Or but some paltry decades back, the wise—
An aunt, a family doctor, and a friend—
Would have obtained, with puzzled, tearful eyes,

A writ of court whereby a while to send
Me—(me of all men, toughest-braced in brain,
Through long endurance)—to house with the Insane.

And still the many-headed Ignorance
Stalks round me with its counsel; very grim
It is to hear its fat lips bluster: "Whim,
Sheer sulky whim,—why look you so askance?—
Have you seen goblins by a moor or manse,
Or borrowed coward legs of frog or hare?"—
Whilst in those wondrous clinics over there
Study the Viennese and men of France
The lore of such distress,—O friends afar
Unknowing me, high names that not to-day
Nor yet to-morrow (poems being what they are)
Shall sound in others' verse: upon my way
Ye light the helpless, Freud, Du Bois, Janet,—
For your deep books do cluster to a star,

A lode-star unto the supreme domain
Of selfhood in last triumph over self. . . .
I speak not, as a volume on the shelf,
Old platitudes: *this* triumph's not o'er pain,
O'er sin, o'er passion, o'er a grief in vain—
Though such I boast—but over what has grown
To have within myself a self its own,
And to defy my brain, by yet my brain.
'Twill be a triumph of a long campaign
Captained by science. Up from in me grew
This Monster Terror. Gain by subtle gain,
What thought long fostered thought shall yet subdue,
As night by night down in the mind's great deep
Thought sends its thought to rive it whilst I sleep.

What thought long fostered thought shall yet subdue,
As night by night down in the mind's great deep
Thought sends its thought to rive it whilst I sleep:

"Red Devil, I no longer shrink at you."
 Meantime by daylight is there work to do
 On that same Devil; every hour to say:
 "I am thy master; thou shalt pass away"—
 Until some morn shall prove my Science true.
 And when that morn shall come, as come it must,
 And Life restores to me the golden key
 And freedom of her City, I shall stand
 Ever thereafter of the sons of dust,
 Ever thereafter in that City, he
 Most fit to guard her people and command.

* * *

Queer People

We who have passed beyond the city gates,
 The dancing and the barter and the beer,
 And fought with beasts on starry hilltops sheer,
 Or manned the life-boat, shouting to our mates
 Among the icebergs in the gusty straits,
 Or charged in battle-smoke as cannoneer,
 Seem, on our coming home, "a little queer"
 To garrulous neighbors, scratching on their pates.
 Good neighbors, we are not less sound of brain,
 For all the shock, the terror, and the pain . . .
 But rather more. Our oddities and acts
 Need not your sympathy or gossip: they
 Do but disturb the issues of your day
 By higher values, founded on new facts.

New Insight . . .

New insight from my fearlessness and pain,
 Which I would chronicle: but be you one
 Who clasps his Wordsworth, Browning, Tennyson,
 As revelation of *all* spirit-gain
 In Life, the Terrible, you'll learn of me
 Little. But let me tell you that I tried
 Their gold by touchstone of my agony,
 Testing their best of wisdom, when she died,

A thousand times; and tallied sound with sound,
 Their verses by my beating heart, and found
 They rang scarce true, as tested by that heart
 Which has become the tuning-fork for art
 Along the deeper octaves.—Goethe only
 Came home to me, when I was most, most lonely.

What spiritual good?—Well, first a hint
 From foresaid words about the bardic three:
 The utter blackness gave new eyes to see
 What truly counts—to tell the living flint
 (That showers the sparks across this cave of earth)
 From simulating limestone, where it beds
 In sturdy nodules of enduring worth,
 Whereof men get the fire, the arrowheads,—
 The hearth and its defenses. In that dark
 I invoiced Life, with fingers of the soul—
 All books, philosophies, and all my friends
 I invoiced. And when I set down a mark
 It was a cryptic sign, with seal and scroll,
 That meant new judgments made for some new ends.

* * *

. . . Descend to Hell

And whirlwind, and arise to day more strong,
 And know man's Consciousness in its *full* dower:
 Namely, in its Intensity and Power.

"In its Intensity": In daily life
 We know not what it is to be alive;
 All our routine is whittling with a knife;
 Or beating with a tom-tom at the hive;
 We hear the belfry clock and call it Time;
 We meet a shadow, and say "good morning, *Friend*";
 We see about us books and lamps and rime
 On wintry windows, as we sit and blend
 With our surroundings. But Intensity
 Is not of such; nor yet of peace or joy,
 In its last revelation: there must be

Grief and remorse, seething in fierce alloy
With anger and terror, ere we once may guess
The unutterable Life of Consciousness.

“And in its Power”: Again, in daily life
We know not what it is to be alive:
We quicken step to shrilling of the fife;
We play at checkers and suppose we strive;
We touch our spirits with a spur of wax,
When drowsy, saying, “We’ve a will to drive”;
We chop a dead reed with a wooden axe;
We douse our head in bowl and think we dive.—
We play with action: yet the Power of Mind’s
Not in the game. But when it takes its own
Distorted shreds, unravels, knots, and binds
(Nor asks of God or Devil gift or loan),
Circled by scoundrel foes, then first we guess
The startling Energy of Consciousness.

XIV. THE WORLD WAR

*Wherein my own striving and strife merge
with mankind's.*

Austrian Cavalier Tune

[DR. H. ZUCKERMANN, SINCE FALLEN IN BATTLE]

Yonder two jackdaws wake,
Crouched in the lowland:
Must I by Danube's brake
Bleed, or in Poland?
What matters where?—
Ere they my soul shall take,
I'll fight, a cavalier.

Yonder two ravens curst
Scream o'er the clover:
Am I to be the first
Whom they shall cover?
What's that to me?—
Forth, in their thousands, burst
Austria's cavalry.

Yonder two crows on high
Flit in the sunset:
When shall the Reaper ply
Scythe at the onset?
Welcome his blade,—
If but our banners fly
Over Belgrade!

Folksong [IN MEMORY OF F. W. R.]

He came from the German valleys,
 Vineyards and linden trees,
 With folksongs for the strangers
 Beyond the misty seas.

And he sang so low in the twilight
 On his comrade's old guitar,
 And the strangers gathered near him,
 But his thoughts were wandering far.

Then he heard the battle calling,
 But the ships would sail no more;
 And the heart of the soldier and singer
 Broke on the stranger's shore.

War News [CRESCIT EUNDO]

The morning *Times* to-day discloses:
 "The Germans use tuberculosis;
 They prick their prisoners on the skin
 And coax the fierce bacilli in."
 As I demurred, my friend averred:
 "For me, I credit every word—
 It jibes so well with all we've heard."
 "Yes, and to-morrow when the *Times*
 Reports its next of German crimes,
 You'll credit that,—it's safe to say—
 Because it jibes with this to-day."

To Colleague Bedier [ON HIS EDITION OF THE DIARIES
OF DEAD GERMAN SOLDIERS IN BELGIUM]

Colleague Bedier, if in those times unvexed
 In learned Paris at thy Table Round
 I so had botched a dusty Old French text,
 As thou this bloodsprent German (lately found);

If I had so mismetred, so misread,
 Had so omitted (negligent—or sly!),
 And in my gloss so misinterpreted,
 To prove my thesis excellent thereby;
 O then how had thy lean and nervous lips
 Sputtered the anger of thy scholar-face!
 Thy flashing eyes, thy beating finger-tips,
 How had they shown me then the pupil's place!
 And all the *séminaire* had laughed at me,
 Colleague Bedier, as Time will laugh at thee.

Above the Battle [1616-1916, AND THEREAFTER]

There's now one sound above the battle blown,
 Above the nations hurling flame for flame—
 One love which hate itself is proud to own,
 One voice of man tumultuous with thy name,
 Shakespeare! The kingdoms of divided earth
 Honor to-day thy conquests o'er them all,—
 And none who know the meaning of thy worth
 To-day will use thee for their clansman call.
 But rather, in these hundred years times three
 Of power still creating light and life,
 We find the omen of thy work to-be—
 Hereafter healer of these wounds of strife.
 Above the battle we behold thy face,—
 Above the battle a united race.

*As I Listened by the Lilacs**

[THE UNSEEN A. E. F. . . . AS IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN]

*As I listened by the lilacs to the thrush this spring,
 The good gray poet said another thing:*

The great bell peals, and the great ships wait,
 And my Captain and my comrades filing through the gate.

*Reminiscences of the three motifs of Walt Whitman's nocturne on the death of Lincoln—the twilight April star, the lilac bush, and the song of the thrush—are combined with a reminiscence of the same good gray poet's other tribute to Lincoln, "O Captain! My Captain!"

The good gray poet, back from the sea

With battle-rent banner, whispered me:

Filing down the wharves with noiseless feet,
Filing under moon from a long, long street
(A long, long street with fork and bend,
And mountain sunsets at the further end):
Shovel-hatted Puritans with funnel-mouth guns;
Eagle-feather crested bowmen bronze;
Buck-skin trappers, fringed to the thighs,
With beaver-caps frayed over buffalo eyes;
Oregon Trailers, sons and sires,
With gun-stocks charred by the prairie fires;
Grizzled Forty-Niners, with picks and barrows;
Log-cabin folk with home-made harrows;
Lasso boys from the ranch-frontiers;
And girl-cornhuskers of the pioneers . . .
Filing under moon from a long, long street,
Tramp, tramp, tramp—to the great sea-fleet.

As I listened in the twilight, after the rain,

The good gray poet said again:

Filing down the piers, over waters black,
Filing through the gate from a long bivouac
(A long bivouac by the stream and the hill,
And the low white stars and the whip-poor-will):
Minute-men with eyelids damp from sleep;
Valley Forge men who limp and creep;
Yorktown men, and Lafayette men,
And Red Coats girt with their swords again;
And the great Sphinx-Head with lips so tight,
With criss-cross belt, on a war-horse white.
And I saw John Brown,—and the rice-swamp blacks
Mopping the sweat with bandanas from their backs.
And I saw Marshal Grant—who but he!—
And Pickett and his men who charged for Lee;
And the blue and the gray and the gray and the blue

(Blent by the years to an olive hue) ;
 And Schurz and his burghers with mud-spattered coats,
 Banded with bunting, sobs in throats . . .
 From a long bivouac, filing to the tide—
 Tramp, tramp, tramp—where the big boats ride.

*As I listened in the fragrance of my door-yard plat,
 Said the good gray poet, in his army-hat:*

Marching under moon, between long aisles
 Of the dim dank heads of the creaking piles;
 Marching in the mists to the eery deep,
 Out of the hinterlands of old sleep,
 Shadowy bulks, primeval births,
 Witch-wild wonders (ours and earth's) ;
 I saw gnarled shapes of Oaks afoot,
 With leafy arms and sprawling root ;
 And wrinkle-skinned trunks of Elms and Pines,
 With savage girdles of torn woodbines
 (And elfin bands I saw between,
 Midnight dewed and moony-green—
 Bands of the Wildrose trooped and trod,
 And the Maidenhair and the Goldenrod) ;
 And the Father-of-Waters, within his hands
 From many a stream wet willow-wands ;
 And the bald Crag-Heads, with a mountain pace,
 In their cloudy midst the Great Stone Face ;
 And the Manitou-rocks with painted side,
 Capped by the snows of the Great Divide . . .
 Out of the hinterlands of old sleep,
 Marching under moon to the edge of the deep,
 Marching in the sea-mist (phantoms? no!)—
 Tramp, tramp, tramp—to the ships below.

*The good gray poet of things that are
 Whispered by the lilacs under one moist star:*

Singing in the night, past towers and tiers,
 Singing through the gate and down the piers:
 Memorial voices, profiles known,

From north and south, from east and west,
Prophet figures, higher than the rest,
Like wraiths of statues, bronze and stone:
Knee-buckled Franklin, with bony wrist
And faggots of the lightning bunched in fist;
Lithe as the west-wind, calm as the sun,
Peering down the moonglade, Emerson
(Peering down an alley, out to sea,
Where the transports leave his vision free);
And bearded Bryant, as cloaked for the rain,
And the lion-head of good Mark Twain;
And midst a hundred, with strange awe
In a garland of grass myself I saw;
All singing in the night to one low tune—
Tramp, tramp, tramp—in the April moon:
“MY CAPTAIN LEANS BY THE GANGWAY SIDE,
AWAITING US AND THE TURNING TIDE—
WITH BENDED HEAD AND ARMS ON BREAST,
AWAITING US FOR THE GREAT SEA-QUEST.”

The Pied Piper *

The huge Pied Piper, in a giant dance,
Began his piping on the fields of France.
The huge Pied Piper, with a fife of steel,
Danced through the nations, toe and heel.
Four crazed years, under winds and the moon,
The Millions followed in a jigging rigadon.

For his legs were hosed in striped bands,
And his sleeves were striped to the fingering hands,
And his cape was striped to his piping throat,
And the striped cap fluttered to step and note . . .
Stripes up and down, and left and right . . .

* “Never before have four hundred million rats followed the lure of the shrill pipe of the rat-catcher.” Nicolai, *Biology of War*.

Red, green, yellow, black, blue, white . . .
Speckled between with star and crest—
But the red stripes O! they outnumbered the rest.
And when failed the lure of his garments pied,
He juggled new bunting from his vest inside.
So four crazed years, under winds and the moon,
The Millions followed in a jiggling rigadoon.

With a fife of steel to puckered lips,
And two cheeks puffing for his finger-tips,
He shrilled each tune of the lure of war,
And danced each measure of his repertoire:
He piped and he jiggled of fear and hate,
Of love of country and glory of state;
And he piped of God and he piped of man—
This giant Jester, this Charlatan.
And for those who loathed his piping shrill
He piped a tune more alluring still:
"Then hurry to my piping, more than ever,
To end my piping now or never!"
And four crazed years, under winds and the moon,
The Millions followed in a jiggling rigadoon.

And the few still slack, as he flung pied cape,
And the few still slack, as he piped his jape,
O the few still slack, as each million reels
Jiggling to the river, behind his heels,
They whipped or they hanged to bar or tree,
And passed with the piper down the lea . . .

To a red, red river, all the host,—
And the Piper walked, like a shadow or ghost . . .
And the Piper walked, like Christ on the sea
In the sunset-storm of Galilee . . .
And he danced on the waters, to his latest tune,
And the Millions perished in a jiggling rigadoon.

The Heretics

A row of bearded fellows . . . four . . .
In hand-cuffs . . . chained to an iron bar . . .
Their bare feet straining to the slimy floor . . .
Stripped to their ragged underwear . . .
Their bruises not yet hardened to a scar . . .
Four bearded chins upon four breasts in prayer.

The twilight made by one high oblong's dim
On him . . . and him . . . and him . . . and him.

Perhaps no matter . . . there's not much to see . . .
No blanket on the cold and clammy bricks . . .
No bread . . . no pitcher . . . bowl . . . or pail . . .
But once in twenty-four or thirty-six
Slow hours of this well conducted jail,
The keepers come with cups of water . . . four . . .
At which each chained man licks . . .
Come with four crusts for jaws . . .
At which each chained man gnaws . . .
(Chained man? . . . chained dog?! . . . chained bear?!)
Between the cursings . . . clubbings . . . kicks.
The keepers go . . . they climb the long stone stair . . .
And all below's the same once more—
Four bearded chins upon four breasts in prayer.

It is a quiet place . . .
Quiet for four . . . or three . . . or two . . . or one.
A little moaning . . . "Father" . . . "God" . . . "thy face,"
And . . . "Will be done" . . . "thy will be done!"
That's all . . .
Except at times the free
Far wash and rumble of the western sea
Against the rocks beside the dungeon wall.
For though the dank brine seep and seep and seep . . .
And crumble the mortar . . . it's so silently,
At least when four are standing in their sleep.

Quiet, so quiet, while the thunders pass,
And the great winds of sunset sweep
Over the prison-island Alcatraz.

Quiet, so quiet . . . where each stands,
Two hands strung up, beside two strung-up hands . . .
They do not hear
The statesmen, far and near,
In hills, and fields, and towns above,
Proclaiming liberty to all the lands
And all the inhabitants thereof!

No motion in this damp, chill under-air . . .
A kind of stale and stagnant fog . . .
For ages pent . . .
The Spaniards brought and housed it there
Of old from some Peruvian bog . . .
And now it's poisoned by such excrement
As hollow hunger and dry thirst can spare
Of four men in a row, half-spent—
Four bearded chins upon four breasts in prayer.

Why bother?—
There has been many another . . .
For instance, Bonnevard and brother . . .
Isaac of York and sundry Jews
Who got the rack or screws . . .
And Torquemada's heretics,
For dabbling in forbidden tricks,
Were put to boil in Christian oil,
Or roasted over consecrated sticks.
There has been many another—
Why bother?

A row of bearded fellows . . . four . . .
And all because
So gentle, and long-suffering, and odd . . .
They had an understanding with their God . . .

They had the will and strength to keep the clause . . .
To bear . . . and bear . . . and bear . . . and bear . . .
They would not give their bodies up to war . . .
Four bearded chins on four dead breasts in prayer.*

The Old Agitator

So they could do it after all! . . .
They locked him up . . . the good old man . . .
Behind the grated window and the wall . . .
Stole in upon his sick-bed . . . whisked him off
Before the rumor and the wrath began . . .
Without one woodland flower of early spring
Pressed to his big palm by some workman's child.

And said the honest warden, welcoming:
"You're rather rangy, Mr. Debs, and tall" . . .
Embarrassed by a momentary cough . . .
"But we will fit you out as best we can" . . .
And the great Proletarian
He straightened up and smiled.

Ten years . . . so let it be . . . he was not wise . . .
Well shut he would not. . . could not . . . keep
Those lips, close-shorn and thin,
Below those keen, unflinching eyes,
And just above the unbearded fighting chin . . .
Those lips with furrows either side, so deep
From mirth and sorrow and unresting sleep . . .
And so they deemed it fit
He learn (like Jeremiah) silence in a pit.

So let it be . . . a state must have firm laws
And watchful citizens that balk

*I owe an apology to the authorities at Alcatraz for this poetic licence—only two of the four are dead as yet, and they died only after their broken bodies had been taken down and shipped to Leavenworth, where scurvy and pneumonia finished the business.

Against a wagging tongue . . .
And one grown gray and gaunt with too much talk,
Who has long since forgotten when to pause,
Or how to please,
May trip at last—even in democracies . . .
And, chiefly, if he tamper with the young,
And worship not the old divinities . . .
And when the charge is read him, clause by clause,
And he replies with scanty penitence,
He'll find (as found that worthy man
At whose incessant lips once Athens took offense)
The gentry of his latter audience
Most ominously niggard of applause . . .
And though even then he talk . . . as talk he can . . .
He lights (like Socrates) on no defense—
Except reiteration of his cause.

So be it . . . his was fair trial and due appeal
Under those just, majestic guarantees
That give the Stars and Stripes their destinies
Over a free (but ordered) commonweal!
That incorruptible and austere court
Of old men to this old man made report:
They made report, this row of staunch patricians,
Unto the bald lone tall man of the plebs;
They bore no grudge, they took no gold,
They may have loved him—for they too were old;
But, seated in their ancient nine positions,
They sealed the prison sunset-years for Debs—
As vindicators of those stern traditions
That tore from black Dred Scott his freeman's shirt,
And locked free child in factory dark and dirt.

So let it be . . . there's nothing for surprise . . .
The thing's so old . . . so wearisomely grim . . .
Nothing for grief . . . except the shame . . .
Grieve for the nation, not for him . . .
For he has but begun his enterprise,
And in this silence finds the lips of flame.

The Mountain of Skulls

I

All guns are silent . . . "I have won," he saith,
And girds his ample cloak . . .
He . . . who? . . . Not Pershing, Haig, or Foch?!
"Old Hindenburg?" some jokester whispereth
(For when we win, we joke). . . .

He . . . *who?* . . . The great King, DEATH.

And in the quiet of the armistice
He takes a long, long journey in his mirth
(No Marshal takes a furlough such as this)
Through many lands of earth . . .

Gathering the skulls . . .

To Archangel among the Arctic gulls . . .
By Kiao-chow's eagle-dedicated rocks . . .
Along the Tigris on to Bagdad gate . . .
The Syrian foothills and old temple blocks . . .
By palm and date . . .
And desert . . . and the mud-flats of the Nile . . .
Pylons and papyrus reeds . . .
And Tanganika's swamps and jungle weeds,
And tropic-leaves, green-glazed as tile . . .
And back . . . gleaning in holes of shells,
Or in mired cartwheels, or in poisoned wells . . .
Back . . . he goes . . . and goes . . .
To the rent sand-spits of the Dardanelles . . .
And gaunt Armenian plateaus . . .

Gathering the skulls . . .

In the Carpathian snows . . .
On Alpine crags . . . and under each crevasse . . .
(He digs and pulls

For, where they fell, straightway they froze) . . .
In the Masurian morass
(Battalion by battalion in stark rows) . . .
And Serbia's oaken mountain pass . . .
And Flanders' poppy fields . . . (again . . . again) . . .
(Loosening from wire, tearing masks away,
Dragging from skeleton airplanes in burnt grass) . . .
And Marne and forests of Ardennes . . .
And roofless villages, all one Pompeii . . .

Gathering the skulls . . .

Down the Atlantic deeps . . . and shallows . . .
The mid-abyss . . . the continental shelf . . .
Forgetting child-bed, hospital, and gallows,
To fetch the rest he does betake himself . . .
Although for these
He pries out many a port-hole, many a hatch,
Before he culls
From strangled necks upon the hunched knees . . .

* * *

By Falkland islands and Antarctic gulls . . .
And under seven seas.

Gathering the skulls . . .

Picking off bits of skin in ghostly light
Amid the storm-winds' lulls . . .
Black skin . . . and bronze . . . and yellow . . .
But chiefly white, or what had once been white,
Beside white fellow . . . and white fellow . . .
Skulls . . . skulls . . . some broad . . . some long . . .
Some strong . . .
Some brittle . . .
Some big . . . and some so little . . .
Little.
He takes them all . . . with one same set grimace . . .
To his own place. . . .

II

Which now becomes the Mountain of the Skulls
At the red river of the Great Mogul's
Red realms of silence in the sunset waste.
A red-white cone, in no green forest based,
It rises alone into a blood-red sky,
Out of its own bleak talus of gray chalk,
Girt with still clouds of ashen-red on high
(Like smoke that lingers when the last winds die),
Above the twisted slag of vanished fire
And rainless pits of dust that once was mire,
Over eternal fields of alkali . . .

It glares in mute and changeless after-glows
Over a glassy, crimson stream that never flows . . .
Changeless . . . as if, between the time
Of stars and setting sun,
Great Death upon that desolated clime
His last great work had done—
Blasting the very laws of day and night,
To gloat forever on that sight.

There is no stir, except the hollow roll
Of some lone skull, down like a bowl . . .
At horrible intervals . . . when the Mountain quakes
From deep, deep under,
As the still living earth shudders and shakes
With subterranean thunder.

III

Know you who built this Mountain of the Skulls,
Who piled these socket-heads—these husks and hulls?
Death knows who piled, who built . . .
All the long ages of the race of man
For this must share the guilt!

The deep inveteracy of thought and act,
Forging from age to age the new machines
(From chariots scythed, to tanks and submarines),
Becoming tradition in each court and clan
With sanctions from romance and fact,
Had made a habit of a monstrous means,
Until the gesture of gun and sword and lance,
The quick-step, the salute, the bugle-blast,
Grew man's fixed nature by inheritance,
And this To-day was born from out the Past.

Know you who reared this grinning pyramid
Of hairless polls with neither lip nor lid?
Death knows . . . and this true verse . . .
The European gamesters, sleek and fat,
(Or wiry, gray, and bowing from the hip),
For this must share the curse!
A hundred years about the board adept
They played for this or that
(A coast, or isle, or stream, or mine, or ship),
An even hundred years, and never slept . . .
While gold-laced lackeys brought them wine to sip . . .
Beside the bank-book and the tall silk hat . . .
And one or two we justly deem the worse
Free not all others from the awful curse.

Know you what built this monument of state,
For the Eternal Potentate?
He knows . . . he knows:
The emboweled pest of all-contagious hate,
That in men's entrails did distill
The toxin whence their thinking did create
The devil-foemen each set out to kill.

He knows . . . he knows:
The tender instincts, fatal as they work,

Of hearth and home and orchard-plot and kirk,
The passion and the pride we name divine,
The dear, dear land and landscape, yours and mine,
One passion, where whatever river flows—
The same by Rhone or Rhine.

He knows . . . he knows:
That exaltation in transfigured eyes,
That insane dance of love beyond all love,
That fierce infection of self-sacrifice
(All other primal instincts far above),
The god's intoxication,—
As seized the Corybantes in old woods,
And maddened the Mænads by the Phrygian floods,—
The supreme ecstasy of immolation . . .
Save that the god was not the God of Birth,
Or of New Wine that gladdeneth—
Not the Great Mother, Earth,
Not Dionysus—but Eternal Death.

What raised Skull Mountain to the sky?—
He knows . . . he knows:
That cunning power of self-doomed mankind
Revenge, rage, ruin, greed, to justify
By concepts deftly put, whereby
It gives itself—by self conceived, combined,
Out of the welter of its corporate life,
The intolerable chaos of its stress and strife—
Reasons and rhetoric of how-and-why,
Which seem a light to who before were blind,
And urge a cause and strengthen hosts to die,
As reason summons from around, behind,
The quickened faith, the prayer on high,—
Till Thought and Ethic, vision-eyed
(By the great Ironist's best master-stroke
Since from the ape the man awoke),
End in one suicide.

IV

And yet there are who round that Mount would grope,
Saying they too, like Death, can count the loss . . .
Saying, no less, it is the Mount of Hope . . .
Saying, "We'll crown it with a golden cross."

V

Know you the Mountain of the Skulls
At the red river of the Great Mogul's
Red realms of silence in the sunset sands?—
Know you it *really*—what it *is*—and *was*?
By all the dead of all the lands,
The loves, the hopes, the death-pangs (day or night)
(Or short or long)
That housed in all these empty shells
(Where now not even the living blow-flies buzz,
Or wild bees build their cells),
By this vast generation, robbed of light,
Of flowers, of children, poesy, and song,—
In name of future good, to right . . .
(So we have said) . . . to right the present wrong,—
By all the dead of all the lands,
We'll swear this Mountain stands,
In Kingdom of Great Death forever stands,
To speak to Life one word forevermore,
On every sea and shore:
No League of Peace (though that awhile might save,
If one same law upon each capitol,
Upon each arch and architrave,
Were clearly, deeply carved),
No League nor Law will do:
But those despised few
In every land who did refuse each call—
The dungeon-chained, the dungeon-starved—
Must be the prophets of the New
Until the few are all.

Sæcla Ferarum

I

'Twas when at last the million flags were stacked
And all the Chiefs had signed the Great Peace Pact,
I saw before a winter's dawn the stars,
In skies as strange as if I saw from Mars:
The Dipper toppling on its handle-end,
Arcturus under, carrying out the bend;
Orion's Oblong tilted, twisted, slim,
With Sirius spurting fire atop of him;
The V of Taurus poised upon its point,
And moonless Dragon sprawling out of joint,
With Jupiter so bright, a fool had said
A comet's tail was arching from its head . . .
Aratus, when he sang his Catalogue,
Saw not the Shining Ones so far agog;
And no witch-woman with a Libyan cry
E'er charmed the Constellations so awry . . .

II

And then across the frozen marshes leapt
A train's fierce whistle while my townsmen slept;
And as it died along the trailing smoke,
Upon the gap of starry silence broke
In jumbled yelps, threaded by wailings through,
The coyotes by the lake-side in the Zoo;
As if first startled in the prairie nest
By the first locomotive rolling west—
That line of moving lights they've ne'er forgot,
Behind the low stack flanging like a pot.

III

So blew the whistles at the armistice . . .
The coyotes answered as they answered this . . .

IV

O never think that all of life is vain,—
Though towns be built on dead-men's bones in mud,
And fields, even when they best put forth their grain,
Be curst, as fertile but with dead-men's blood—
Yes, though still issue from the Mountain Door
The unborn generations to be slain,
With unknown flags and engines for new war,
Till self-destroyed, on coast and hill and plain,
Mankind with town and harvest is no more! . . .
O never think that life thereby has ceased:
Eating and drinking and the will to strive
(And sleep by rock and rainbow after feast)
And the great thrill of being here alive,
Will yet remain in birth succeeding birth,
With trails still open from the north and east,
All up and down this goodly frame, the earth—
Will yet remain in fish and fowl and beast! . . .

And, lo, the Beasts not only wake in Man
Hope for the Life-Force still, beyond his span;
But offer him, before he sink and cease,
New life his own and intervals of peace.
Nay, more than Egypt's Cult and India's Kine,
The Animals may vouch us the Divine;
And Man may yet outwit his doom forecast—
Even by becoming one with them at last! . . .

V

Why were we all so self-absorbed in woe
Through those five years not very long ago?
We are not what we seem, and we have powers
That touch on deeper, other Life than ours:
Though path were lost that Christ and Buddha trod
Whereby the self may lose itself in God,

There yet remained to us the blest escape,
By sprawling trance in disencumbered hours
(With face and belly flattened to the sod),
Where self may lose itself in Ox or Ape.
But no man cropped the grass among the flowers!
And no man wound a tail about his nape!
Or felt the heat and rain, or saw the sky,
But with a human skin, a human eye! . . .

VI

Yet all these years, whilst our one paltry race
Bustled with flame and sword from place to place
(So troubled lest man's great ideals die),
The old telluric Animals, I guess—
That sniff at hole, or stop with ears aprick,
Or cower forward from the young they lick,
Or with deep meditation prowl and pry,
Knowing their waters in the wilderness,
Knowing their seasons through the land and sky—
Repeated those vast worlds of consciousness
That furnish earth her answer to the moon
And to the sun and stars her reason-why,—
The Life-Force of her ancient night and noon:
From Arctic tundra to the pampas south,
By glen and glacier, on the seaward ness,
Through belting forests to the river's mouth,
On shaggy mountains in the drench and drouth,
And down the air and ocean streams no less!
The paws, the wings, the fins, wherewith they pass,
And scaly bellies wriggling through the grass!
The fuzz, the fur, the feathers, and the chines,
And in the thickets bead-eyed balls of spines!
The spots, the stripes! The black, the white, the dun!
And stalking water-birds ablaze in sun!

Behind façades of motions, shapes, and hues,
Behind this moving veil, what news, what news?

When the Field Gray defiled through Brussels town,
What did the Bear devise on flopping down?
When Lusitania sank, was the Raccoon
Dreaming of fish in tree-top under moon?
When Bayonets plunged (so skilfully withdrawn),
What felt the Tiger with his tooth in fawn?
When man's four limbs convolved in pain and hate,
What felt the Octopus through all his eight,
Cast on the beach by tidal wave at dawn?
What felt the Mole, the blind and blindly led,
Burrowing with paws and ridging earth with head?
What felt the Hawk, who, in the clouded night,
Swooped to the pinfold by the window-light?
Or Shark on back, with lower jaw agape—
That chinless jaw, on top and toothed for rape? . . .
What sense, where limbs stumped on without their toes,
As Caterpillar's feet on stem or rose?
Where hands were claws and hooks (not made but born),
And lips were lengthened into beaks of horn? . . .
When lightning cried the slain from land to land,
What mused the Turtle rounding out the sand?
When boys and girls on Volga starved and Rhine,
What smelt Rhinoceros and Porcupine?
When the Four Sages under Mirrors sat,
What pow-wows were the Jackals, Buzzards, at? . . .
Huge as the monster Tank that lately rose
Like Dinosaur from mud of fen and flat,
The Elephant erects his trunk and blows:
Is it his joy in Man which causes that,
Or a straw tickling half-way up his nose? . . .
What secrets in the purring of a Cat?
The cooing of the Dove, the shriek of Jay?
Or scream of Sea-Lion, tumbling flapper-finned?—
The air is full of sounds, besides the wind . . .

VII

Have ye not heard how, as in womb ye grew
(So long before ye waxed to men and slew),

Ye bore from week to week trace merged in trace,
There in the silence, of your pristine race?—
The gills of fish, the two-valved heart of bird,
The simian's tail, the huddled body furred?
Well, then be comforted: for still we find
Body is ever correlate with mind,
And, whilst ye shared the frame of bird or fish,
Ye shared no less its feeling, fancy, wish.
And know: the heart, the tail, the fur, the gill,
However altered, are our portion still;
And so it follows: still the mind no less
Secretes some portion of their consciousness.

The Muse of Darwin! . . . Next, the Muse of Freud:
We know that all we fancied, feared, enjoyed,
From babyhood upon these shores of light
Works still in us, most manifest at night,
Whence dreams, they say, and ghosts, and second-sight.
Why not the fancies and the fears and joys
We shared before our birth as girls and boys—
The animal sensations of our prime?
Are these not there? Shall they not have their time?
To link us, by probed memories within,
Unto the larger life, the vaster kin . . .
Plotinus, Bergson, ye can gloss my rhyme!

VIII

The stars ere dawn are twisted out of place!
Something is working in my brain, my face!
Lion and ferret, muskrat, eagle, deer,
Penguin and seal, porpoise and wolf and whale,
And horse and cow, and dog with wagging tail,
Are circling round me, near and yet more near:
From jungles, canyons, oceans, trees, and skies,
From crags, from coves, from river reeds, they peer,—
Earth's Animals, with old familiar Eyes . . .

Whilst, ever since the hush of guns, I hear
Familiar invitations in their cries.

The Quaker Meeting-House

I

Beyond the corn-rows from our Barracks stood
Along the elm-arched turnpike, out of town,
The Quaker Meeting-House, likewise of wood,
With windows burning when the sun went down;
Sided with shingles, roofed like plain big A,
With neither bell-tower, cross, nor apse . . .
And whitest when the moon was off that way,
Beyond the rustling corn-rows, after taps . . .

II

And in the dark the weary boys would joke
From cot to cot about the Quaker folk:

No double bars of silver braid they wore,
They never learned what the salute was for,
Nor the ten bugle-calls (as we):
They passed the Captains in their homespun gray,
With salutation but by "yea" and "nay,"
And antique "thee" . . . and "thee" . . .

And trusted to "the inner light," they say . . .
But we? . . .

They never learned, beneath a high cross-pole,
On dummy (jerking like a living soul),
Where bayonets best may make a certain hole,
And then pull free . . .
They never learned by scrunch of hand and thumb
How deftly one might make two eyeballs come,
Were trusty trench-knife lost in some melee . . .
As we . . .

But, like their humble-witted forebears, they
Would enter, from the turnpike, each First Day,
That little door—with clapboard lintel telling
By date colonial how old the dwelling
In which they bowed in silent rows to pray . . .
And all the week, under the blue sky-dome
(Fringed with the tree-tops on the inner base)
They hoed their corn-rows in the crusted loam,
Or carried back a baby where it fell,
Or gave a child cold water from the well,
Or gathered faggots, piling them in place,—
Against the Winter and the Fires of Home.

III

We passed each other sometimes on the pike . . .
But both were growing more and more unlike.
We donned the casques of Sargon's phalanx—they
Renewed the broad-brimmed hats of Yesterday.
And, as on chin and cheek-bone we began
Strangely to take an old barbaric face,
Swart as the profile of Assyrian,
They gained, in spite of all their toil and tan,
Yet more the blondness of their Saxon race.

Yes . . . as the wolf-tooth in us made us leer,
Their lips were tightening with resolve and pain;
And as we won the tiger's pointed ear,
They showed the scars of ears cut off again;
And, as our necks grew shorter and more strong
And heads still downward in our bodies bored,
We marked on *their* necks, as we jeered along,
The print-marks of a three-ply hempen-cord . . .

We had our diverse business . . . had our haunts . . .
We were the revenants . . .

While in the very sky-top every night
Above both Barracks and the House of White,
Vega, of the Lyre among the stars,
Burned in a gracious point of azure light . . .
Vega, to be (if prophets reckon right)
Sometime the pole-star for this earth of ours.

IV

And when we quit the Barracks for the Boats
With awful shouts in throats
(Though still some human laughter),
It seemed most strange this quiet folk should quit
The Meeting-House and all the peace of it,
And follow after . . .

We neither of us quit in fact . . .
However alien the surrounding tract . . .
And whilst we worked the poison-fire and shell
(Taught, like our foes, to work them fiercely well),
This wistful, meditative folk
Would walk between in No Man's Land,
By crater-pits and molten sand,
And tree-spikes where the copses used to stand—
As if conducted by an ancient spell:
Under the roar, the flame, the smoke,
This quaint, uncanny, visionary folk
Through the barrage would enter each First Day
That legendary door with lintel telling
By *anno domini* how safe the Dwelling
(Even when the shrapnel on the roof-tree broke)
In which they bowed in silent rows to pray . . .
Or was that timbered House of seasoned Oak,
Four-square in lightnings of the booming Plain
Only a phantom and the Devil's joke
On us poor fools, the slayers and the slain? . . .

And all the week, under the red sky-dome
(Fringed round with cannon on the inner base)
They hoed their corn-rows in the charmed loam,
Or carried back the bodies where they fell,
Each to its plot of earth and mother-race,
Or wiped from bleeding mouths the grit and foam
To give them water from a certain well,
Or gathered faggots, storing them in place—
Against the Winter and the Fires of Home. . . .

v

The Killing's over and the Barracks creep,
Hauled by a rope and windlass, down the pike—
Sold for machine-shops, very cheap,
Or for a sty and cow-barn, if you like.

The Killing's over, but the Meeting-House
(Within forever quiet as a mouse),
After the hail of shot, the rain of fire,
Still gleams, when hoeing in the fields is done,
With shingle-siding in the setting sun,
Before the hour of Vega of the Lyre . . .
You cannot guess how beautiful it seems:
Above the Capitol and marble dome,
Above the spired Cathedral and its dreams,
Unto the way-worn sons of men it gleams
Far down the Land-Marks to the ocean streams,
With windows burning like the Fires of Home.

May-Night

Blue are the twilight heavens above the hill,
A yellow half-moon's high within the blue,
And rosy May-night clouds are soft and still,
And all the world beside is shut from view.

The plum-trees, whitening buds and greening shoots,
Close in the dusky cottage; and beyond
The wood-thrush in the hazel-thicket flutes,
And frogs are croaking in the unseen pond.

It is the old, the odorous privacy
That once had been both peace and gentle song,
But now how such an evening troubles me
After earth's five most awful years of wrong . . .
Whilst inland, from the plains, the crags, the sea,
With all the stars the dead men's armies throng.

XV. THE LYNCHING BEE

And other post-war matters.

The Lynching Bee

I

Here at the crossroads is the night so black
It swallows tree and thicket, barn and stack,
Even though the sickle of the new moon hang,
Keen as a knife, bent like a boomerang,
A witch's bangle in the Zodiac.

Black on the crossroads . . . but in skies off yonder
There broods a fiery gloom, a hectic glow,
Like the last twilight just before the thunder,
Or omens of doomed soothsayers, long ago . . .
To-day the veriest dog or mule would know
It only means a lighted town thereunder.

II

Honk, Honk!
On to the fork! Honk! Honk!
You hear?
From hand-squeezed bulb and belching conch!
Honk! Honk!
Down in the hollow now, but near.
How many there?—
Honk! Honk!
Topping the hill off there—
Behind the foremost cone of glare—
That, like the swift typhoon,
Sweeps on along each length of rut
And makes their ridges as clear cut
As in Uganda at high noon

Stand out the Mountains of the Moon.
Honk,—for the brasses and cat-gut!
Honk, Honk,—for cymbals and bassoon!
New times, new music and new fun!
Though Bottom's gone and Oberon,
With Satyr, Dwarf, and pet Baboon,
Midsummer nights have still their rites.
Honk, Honk: "We've caught the coon!"
("Honk" means they've caught the coon.)

III

They stop—they jerk—they chug—they back.
And in a monstrous ring they park,
With ghostly cones converging from the dark
Upon a central tree all split and black,
Whose limbs and leaves are caverned out of sight
In the eternity of night.
It's like a magic circle where
Snake-dancers, striped, brown, and bare,
With pouch in waving hand and horns on hair,
In old times swayed and swung
And called on Tunga-Tung,
With nasal *ang* and guttural *unk*
Around a lightning-blasted trunk,
Or hissed in chorus with a serpent-stare.
Yet nothing like this there—
It's only the sign-board of the town's,
And crossroads cottonwood by Farmer Brown's.

IV

It's only twelve true men in pants and coats
(The sort who pay their bills, and cast their votes,
Or file to jury boxes on hot afternoons) . . .
Each with a finger on a trigger,
Dragging by ropes, around his gullet tied,
With hobbled legs and arms well lashed to side,

The best of all buffoons—
A banjo-boy and jigger,
A hovel-doorway bawler of coarse tunes.
Like Caliban he shuffles, only bigger;
Or Orang-outang, only larger-eyed—
A bandy-leggèd nigger,
Quite jerky, but all silent down inside.

V

They take the rope off at the tree—perhaps
Won't hang him after all?—These humorous chaps!
Just make him dance amid the glare
For women-folk and boys and girls back there,
Still in their seats?
Make him show off his feats?—
Stand on his head-piece while he eats
Hoe-cakes or possum sweets?
Or turn him up, and have him wag his ears;
Or wriggle and wrinkle scalp and brow,
Like a fly-bitten back of Holstein cow,
And throw from pate a bowl or plate,
While underneath he grins and leers?—
He'll butt his thick skull 'gainst the trunk, I think,
And then draw back, guffaw, and wink.

VI

Not so. They pay a chain out link by link.
Hear it rattle, hear it clink!
A good stout chain so much can do!—
As dancing bear and old-time showman knew,
Or bloodhound leashed at kennel door in straw.
And down along the Nile,
With Pharaoh's Sphinx in view,
The Coptic coolies, with a chain or two
Around his belly, tail, and jaw,

Aboard the freighter hoist the crocodile
For Circus or for Zoo—
A stout chain holds,
Come fear or fire, whatever's in its folds.

VII

They strip him, overalls and shirt,
They set his back against the tree,
They wind the links so tight about,
In girdles two and three. . . .
And yet it hardly seems to hurt,—
For not a word says he.
Honk! Honk!

VIII

He stands five fathoms deep in glare agrin.
Honk, Honk! Honk, Honk!
His skin-bark on the tree bark-skin,
Trunk grafted on to trunk.
Honk! Honk! . . .
The graft should take, for they are close of kin,—
Both sprung of one old soil of earth,
Both fed on rain and air and dirt from birth,
Both tough and stark and thin . . .

IX

One steps with jack-knife up. And he
Will cut the bark—of which dark tree?
Nigger or cottonwood?—With that
He gelds him like a colt or cat!
But the coon's caterwauls and wails
(Honk, Honk! Honk, Honk!)
Fall thin and blurred and flat—
While every conch-horn at him rails:

"No more he'll spawn in bush or bed,
With cocaine crazed, with whiskey drunk,
A charcoal woolly head,
Or yellow half-breed brat!"
Honk, Honk!

X

Another comes with brush and pot,
And smears him over, as with ointment hot.
Honk! Honk!
Good fellow, at your trellised house in town,
You boil the tar to indigo and brown,
Shimmering in sunshine, bubbling to the brim—
Why waste it at the crossroads here on him?
Tar on your upturned row-boat sinks
Makes you a roadbed firm and fit;
Tar on your upturned row-boat sinks
In all the nail-holes, joints, and chinks;
Tar on your gadding daughter's white kid shoe
Was black, and tickled you all through;
But, brother, with the brush and pot,
Tar does no good on hide of Hottentot—
Or have you feathers in a bag or two?—
If so, by now, he'd just as lief as not.
Honk! Honk!

XI

With rags, and straw, and sticks, and other toys,
In run the women-folk and girls and boys.
They'll prod his ribs? tickle his arm-pits? sop
His sweating cheeks, as with a pantry mop?
Such crossroads pranks are not just right
For decent town-folk, it would seem. . . .
(Or is this only a midsummer dream
In innocent midnight?) . . .

Besides they haven't the heart. They drop
Their knickknacks at black angles and bare feet,
And cool him from the spouts of cans
(Fetched from below-stairs, under washing pans
Porcelain-lined and scoured so white).
And then they all, excepting one, retreat,
Back through the length of light.

XII

This one is honored over every other,—
She is the dead child's Mother.

And the two glare and glare
At one another
In two eternities of hate and pain,
Yet with such monstrous union in despair,
Such hideous sameness in their haggard shapes,
The one, the other,
That you would say the twain
Seemed like a savage sister and twin-brother
Dying of hunger out among the apes.

XIII

Her hand is clutching her unsuckled breast—
You know the rest:
The bloody curls, the dainty skirt a shred,
The sprawling hand-prints on the legs and head,
Her body's little body in a shed. . . .
Then down she kneels;
You see her hunched back and her upturned heels. . . .
But not the scratch and scratch,
Not the small flame that tips the second match. . . .
And not her hands, her face, her hank of hair,—
As when a Java woman kneels in prayer,
Under a temple-hut of thatch,

Before some devil-idol standing lone,—
Not far from jungles and the tiger's lair,—
Carved from the teak-wood to a jet-black face,
With Pagan wrinkles, curving pair by pair,
With set grimace,
And two great eyeballs, staring white in stone . . .
Whilst smoke curls roofward from its hidden base. . . .

The Mother rises . . . will depart . . .
Her duty done . . . and her desire. . . .
And as she turns, you see a strange
And quiet rapture of most uncouth change.
For from her burning marrow, her crazed heart,
She has transferred the fire
Of horror and despair
To the dumb savage there. . . .
She has transferred, she thinks, the fire to him.
Honk, Honk! let lights be dim!
(And now the lights are dim.) . . .

XIV

And for a moment is the night so black
It swallows tree and coon and all the pack,
And lets the sickle of the new moon hang,
Keen as a knife, bent like a boomerang,
A witch's bangle in the Zodiac.

XV

Gone is the light that played upon the tree,
But at the cottonwood's own base
Another light now takes its place—
And there is still so much for us to see.
Honk! Honk!
There have been many bonfires on the earth,
Born out of many moods and needs of men:

As when the maskers, in their twilight mirth
On Wessex heaths, would burn Guy Fawkes again;
As when the bustling country-side in dread
Against the Armada's coming set the beacons,
In the heroic English days, on Beachy Head,
When the midsummer sea-winds blew;
As when the village dames and Yankee deacons
Out on the common had a barbecue;
As when the boys in South and North
Still make the boxes blaze and crackle on the Fourth.
The ghouls and witches too
In olden times and regions far away
Danced at their wonted rendezvous
Upon the Brocken on the first of May,
Screaming round the bonfire's light
All through Walpurgis Night.—
Honk! Honk!

There is much fascination in a flame,—
Not least, whenever it has sprung
In intertwining tongue and tongue,
And left the one small spot from whence it came—
Faster, faster, higher, higher,
Shapes of wing, and wave, and lyre,
Shapes of demon-heads and peakèd caps
And flying smocks, and shreds and scraps
Of all fantastic things without a name.
Tongue after tongue in middle air—
Snatched from existence, how and where?—
There is much fascination in a flame—
Not least, when it is yellow, blue, and red,
With blackness for a background and a frame,
Still fuel-fed
With straw and wood and tar and kerosene,
And some organic matter still alive.—
Its witcheries of color, how they strive!—
Even though some smudge and smoke may get between.

XVI

Yet two vast bloodshot eyeballs by their might
Out-top the flame, though from the flame their light—
Two eyeballs wrought (like eyeballs of the steer's
Or dog's, or cat's, or woodchuck's, or a deer's)
By one blind Nature in a mammal's womb,—
By one Herself with neither eyes nor ears,
Nor birth, nor breath, nor doom.

The two vast eyeballs grow and grow,
Till, to the masters of the revels,
They seem the eyeballs of the devil's
Ascending from hell-fire down below.
The masters will not have it so:
A pole, all glowing charcoal at the tip,—
Zip, Zip! Zip, Zip!
Honk, Honk! Honk, Honk!
And the blind savage at the flaming tree
No more will glare so monstrously.

XVII

But on the crossroads our midsummer dream
Converts each flame into a scream, a scream—
A shriek, a shriek!
The horns honk at them as a hose at fire;
But still with every honk they come,
Shriek after shriek,
But fiercer, faster, higher!
(And all the while before, he was as dumb
As Roman martyr, schooled to turn the cheek.)
Honk, honk, away to left and right!—
Between the honking and the shrieking black
The odds (awhile) are ten to one to-night
In favor of the blazing maniac!
All ancient Africa is in his yells:
The wounded zebra's neighing, the gazelle's

Fierce whinny at the salt-lick, and the goat's;
The roars of lions, with distended throats,
Over the moonlit rocks for hollow hunger;
The bellowing elephants, with jaws agape,
And lifted trunks that thrash across their backs
Like writhing pythons or the great sea-conger,
Their monstrous hindlegs bogged beyond escape
In fire-swept jungles off their beaten tracks.
All Africa is in the negro's shrieks:
The forests with their thousand parrot-beaks,
From Nile and Congo to the Cape;
But the Gorilla, the man-ape,
With his broad, hairy, upright chest,
Seems to out-scream the rest.
All Africa is in his agony:
The human ladings at the western coast,
The slave-ship, and the storm at sea,
The naked bodies (never very old)—
Dragged, sick and crippled, from the fetid hold
And over the pitching gunwales tossed,
Both male and female, overboard,
While sharks, careening on their backs,
In the green swells with scudding foam astreak,
Ate up the blacks,
And crew and captain prayed the Lord,
Or crammed fresh oakum in the leak.
All Africa is on his lips:
The million sweats, the million bloody whips,
The million ankles festering in a cord—
The unborn baby still between the hips,
The bent gray head along the rice-swamp humming,
"O Massa Gawd, I'se coming."

XVIII

His voice has come from other times and places. . . .
And hence away it carries far and far. . . .
For in mid-darkness, level with a limb,

Above the flames and smoking tar,
Ride feather-crested heads that bob at him,
With peering faces,
There—and—there—and there!
Faces, Faces,
Sudden and weird as those that loom and peep
Upon us nightly just before we sleep.
No hands, nor arms, nor tomahawks you see,
No thighs in buck-skins dyed and slashed,
No moccasin, no foot, no knee,
Not even a copper torso brave and bare
From many a war-path scarred and gashed—
But only faces, faces, faces,
Riding in the air—
Faces, faces, faces, faces,
Feather-crested with long braided hair,
Peering with an old desire
From the gloom upon the fire,
Summoned back from Otherwhere. . . .
Summoned back from What-has-been:
“Is that a Jesuit father at the stake
Burning for his Jesus’ Sake?—
He hung us crosses round our necks to save—
But when the Mohawks to our village came
They killed both squaw and brave;
We Hurons put the Mumble-Jumble to the flame.
The cross it was no good to make us win—
It was bad medicine!”
And Seminole, Pawnee, and Sioux,
Apache, Blackfoot, Chippewa, and Crow,
Each gloats as if he saw anew
His own best captive of the long ago. . . .

XIX

The faces fade away. . . .
The Negro’s cries
Have joined the uncouth sounds of Yesterday—
The incantations to the blood-red moon,

The ululations in the eclipse at noon,
The old palm-island lullabies
That ring-nosed crones were used to croon,
Squatting circle-wise. . . .
And the twelve Shadows to the fire fling
Great logs with fungus, spines, and rotted pith,
And great dead boughs with thin and sprawling arms
(Fetched from about a long abandoned spring,
And toad-stool woodlots of surrounding farms)
As if to cage in wickerwork therewith
(Like the wild people of a South-Sea myth)
The Demon-in-fire from everything it harms. . . .

The Negro's corpse will take strange shapes,
As the flames gnaw it, flesh and bone;
But neither men shall see, nor apes,
For it shall burn from now alone. . . .

Alone . . . and up and up . . . and down and down. . . .
While honkers honk it back to town.

xx

At last the stench, or glow of embers, brings
The wolves, or wolf-like things . . .
Such as on earthquake midnights prowl around
Smoulder of fallen beams and littered ground,
And tear from dead hands golden finger-rings.
But though they crouch in slow two-legged stealth,
Their hunt is not for wealth.
They paw into the cinders, as with hooks . . .
Snatch something out,
With gloating, starveling looks . . .
A bit of rib . . . or skull . . . or crup . . .
Hot ash and finger knuckle . . .
They wrap them up,
And putter round about . . .
And chuckle . . .
And foot it off and down the road,

Past the weasel, skunk, and toad,
The barnyard rat,
The hooting owl and the whirring bat.

XXI

But over the spot of glowing embers, listen,
The poplar's leaves are rustling like the rain
That patters on my garden-shrubs by night. . . .
The dew may glisten,
The south-wind come this way again,
And wander thither,
But the charred cottonwood has caught the blight. . . .
Its leaves shall wither.
Here on the fork, except that spot of red
(Still fierce as some primordial desire),
All lust is dead:
The lust to breed, the lust to burn;
The rut of flesh, the glut of fire. . . .
Lift up the head,
If still you can, and turn
To the great spaces of the skies.
Black . . . black . . . all black . . .
The moon has set,—perhaps elsewhere to hang,
Keen as a knife, bent like a boomerang,
A witch's bangle in the Zodiac . . .
Black . . . black . . . all black . . .
Though dawn be pregnant with her enterprise,
And stars perhaps will keep . . .
Black . . . black . . . and over yonder,
The glow is gone from all the town thereunder . . .
And all the people sleep . . . and sleep . . . and sleep.*

*(You cringe and shrink?—

It makes your own eyes in their sockets ache?—

O squeamish listener, but think

It's all a midnight dream, and no one is awake;

And in the morning, with the bobolink,

We'll see together, you and I,

The flowers, the fields, the sun, the sky,

And the magnolia blossoms, white and pink.)

Derelicts

At Jackson Corners, on Lincoln Highway,
Down there in God's own Country, "T'way,"
Under the apple-trees, behind the pickets,
In the rank quack-grass and the sumach thickets
And the black-eyed susans and the Solomon seals,
Is a yard with the craziest junk on wheels:
Dead Man's rusted, rotted swappings . . .
Battered hayricks with cradles sprung;
Gravel-carts with splintered tongue;
Buggies with wind-rent window-trappings,
And the horse-hair stuffing sticking through
The mildewed seats of faded blue;
Sagging phaëtons, cracked to the ribs,
With the lamps by the dash-board both askew;
Milk-wagons mouldy as old corn-cribs,
Their whipple-trees pivoted half-way round
Between the shafts still propped from the ground. . . .
One has a rain-speckled board for a prop,
With a handicraft sign, still to be read,
When the sun shines in, if you stand on your head:
WILHELM SCHNEIDER—BLACKSMITH SHOP. . . .
Springs and fenders of gaunt gray gigs,
Fifty grave-yard skeleton rigs,
Fit to join in a Dance of Death
With the horses that pulled and the farmers that whoa'd
(Hear the squeaking of their joints in jigs
Till the Man in the Moon seems holding his breath),
All dead together—bone, hide, and steel—
Derelicts all of the Open Road
Before the morning of the Automobile. . . .
Grease-less axles, hub-split spokes,
Nevermore to be auctioned hence . . .
Under gnarled apple-trees big as oaks,
Behind the palings of a paint-peeled fence.

The Train

Across the twilight swamp beyond the lake,
Moves like a caravan or glimmering snake
(With siren whistle on the evening air
Out to the low mists and the first high stars
And crossroads brown and bare),—
Moves on from woods to woods the train of cars.

Are those her own lights in a fiery line?
Or does the great sun still
Through some deep hollow of a western hill
Upon her far panes shine?

A train so often touches me with wonder . . .

She comes from mighty places of the earth,
With canyons and black waters under;
She crawled up mountains, and she leapt the firth;
She skirted cataracts, with her own thunder.
She plunged into the regions of the rain
That crossed her iron course,
And in an hour out she fared again
With nothing lost of all her flame and force.
She cut through ice-age and moraine,
Round bends of blasted outcrop autumn-vined,
Through limestone tunnels of the paleozoic,
Then puffed her clouds to clouds above the plain,
In overplus of all her stress and strain,
Unconscious, blind—
And yet a thing heroic
With her long wails, like triumph over pain.

What monsters of the elder earth
With sagging bellies of tremendous girth
Traversed such rolling spaces far?—

And yet the forces of her moving are
Of still more ancient birth:
Not sluggish feed of oozy fern and grass,
But sun's own fire and cosmic steam and gas.

She came from mighty places, and she goes
(Far from my window here and me),
Whatever lightning flares or tempest blows,
On to the mightiest the round earth knows—
Head onward to the sea:

Past orchards, of their apples shorn
(Empty of all but of the robin's empty nest),
Ponds, pastures, quarries, and sawn stumps of trees,
Or where the stacks of tented corn
Upon the stubble prairie rest
Like rows of Indian old tepees.

Past more than these:
Past the coke-ovens burning into morn,
And the long houses of the factories;
Past the suburban marshes and gray dumps,
And scraggly willow clumps,
Past picture-boards with their grotesqueries—
Their lettered lure of promised hopes—
Cigars, cathartics, soaps,—
Past here and there a college on a hill,
And the white cupolas for telescopes.

Things man has done or will.

These will she pass or has already passed,
To come at last,
The dust and soot upon her plates and shards,
With shriek and clanging bell,
With puff-balls from reverberant pulsations,
Into the midnight coruscations
Of the Yards—
Where end the rails she rode so long and well,
In caverned spots of green and white and red,

And blotches of huge shadows, quick or dead,
And thousand shimmering wires crisscross overhead,
And poles with zigzag arm or horizontal spar.

Here her prodigious sisters are . . .

And from her sides she belches then,
By hundreds, men—and men—and men,
With empires in the brain,
Empires of gold, of sword, of voice, of pen,
Of love or heresy or hate,—
The which, expanding in the rhythmic sway
Of her large motions through the night and day,
The continental train
Herself did half, or more than half, create!

Leo Frank

At last ye got him; there he swings
Above the howling people-kings.
At last ye got him; he outstood
In innocence and hardihood
The servile court, the madman's knife,
The wreck of name and home and wife,
Still trusting God would see him through.
At last ye got him in the night,
Sick, wounded, worn, and strangely white—
Your burgher, Leo Frank, the Jew.

Ye hanged him on the gallows-tree.
He'll hang for all the years to be;
Ye nor your children shall have power
To take him down a single hour;
Nor wind, nor rain, nor bird of prey,
Shall eat that awful Form away,
Nor God once veil it from your view:
For 'tis no human head and limb—
Ye hanged God's Justice, hanging him,
Your burgher, Leo Frank, the Jew.

Tom Mooney

I

Tom Mooney sits behind a grating,
Beside a corridor. (He's waiting.)
Long since he picked or peeled or bit away
The last white callus from his palms, they say.
The crick is gone from out his back;
And all the grease and grime
Gone from each finger-nail and every knuckle-crack.
(And that took time.)

II

Tom Mooney breathes behind a grating,
Beside a corridor. (He's waiting.)
The Gold-men from ten cities hear in sleep
Tom Mooney breathing—for he breathes so deep.
The Gold-men from ten cities rise from bed
To make a brass crown for Tom Mooney's head;
They gather round great oaken desks—each twists
Two copper bracelets for Tom Mooney's wrists.
And down sky-scraper basements (all their own)
They forge the spikes for his galvanic throne.
The Gold-men love the jests of old Misrule—
At ease at last, they'll laugh their fill;
They'll deck Tom Mooney king, they will—
King over knave and fool.
And from enameled doors of rearward office-vaults,
Lettered in gold with names that never crock,
They will draw back the triple iron bolts,
Then scatter from the ridges of their roofs
The affidavits of their paper-proofs
Of pallid Tomfool's low and lubber stock.

III

Tom Mooney thinks behind a grating,
Beside a corridor. (He's waiting.)
(Tom Mooney free was but a laboring man;

Tom Mooney jailed's the Thinker of Rodin.)
The Workers in ten nations now have caught
The roll and rhythm of Tom Mooney's thought—
By that earth-girdling S. O. S.,
The subtle and immortal wireless
Of Man's strong justice in distress.
The Workers in ten nations think and plan:
The pick-ax little Naples man,
The rice-swamp coolies in Japan
(No longer mere embroidery on a screen),
The crowds that swarm from factory gates,
At yellow dusks with all their hates,
In Ireland, Austria, Argentine,
In England, France, and Russia far
(That slew a Czar),—
Or where the Teutons lately rent
The Iron Cross (on finding what it meant);
At yellow dusks with all their hates
From fiery shops or gas-choked mines,
From round-house, mill, or lumber-pines,
In the broad belt of these United States.
The Workers, like the Gold-men, plan and wake,—
What bodes their waking?
The Workers, like the Gold-men, something make,—
What are they making?—
The Gold-men answer often—
"They make Tom Mooney's coffin."

IV

Tom Mooney talks behind a grating,
Beside a corridor. (He's waiting.)
You cannot get quite near
Against the bars to lay your ear;
You find the light too dim
To spell the lips of him.
But, like a beast's within a zoo
(That was of old a god to savage clans),
His body shakes at you—

A beast's, a god's, a man's!
And from its ponderous, ancient rhythmic shaking
Ye'll guess what 'tis the Workers now are making.
They make for times to come
From times of old—how old!—
From sweat, from blood, from hunger, and from tears,
From scraps of hope (conserved through bitter years
Despite the might and mockery of gold),
They make, these haggard men, a bomb,—
These haggard men with shawl-wives dumb
And pinched-faced children cold,
Descendants of the oldest, earth-born stock,
Gnarled brothers of the surf, the ice, the fire, the rock,
Gray wolf and gaunt storm-bird.
They make a bomb more fierce than dynamite,—
They weld a Word.
And on the awful night
The Gold-men set Tom Mooney grinning
(If such an hour shall be in truth's despite)
They'll loose the places of much underpinning
In more than ten big cities, left and right.

The Pledge [FOR ROBERT M. LA FOLLETTE]

In the Valley of Decision,
Down the Road of Things-that-are,
You gave to us a vision,
You appointed us a star,
And through Cities of Derision
We followed you from far.

On the Hills beyond To-morrow,
On the Road of Things-to-do,
With that strength of hand we borrow
As we borrow soul from you,
We know not sloth nor sorrow
And will build your vision true.

The Beggar

When the ships blow up and the towers fall down,
There dogs mankind, through lane and town,
A querulous Beggar in a Syrian dress,
Telling the story of his wan distress:
He dogs the market-place, he dogs church-door,
The wagons and the wharves from shore to shore;
"*A penny, a penny,*" he crieth his lack
Down a million miles of railroad track;
The cottages of all the lands make one row;
And the gatemen at the shops daren't bid him go;
And the bank-grilles open as his steps advance,
And he walks right up through the roses and the dance . . .
And I saw him one morning in Trafalgar Square,
And when I loafed at Lemnos, he was there!

Though he is not blind, nor has a wooden leg,
Yet the people all would shudder were he not to beg . . .
And he hits you a palm and his one song old:
"*My children . . . are hungry . . . my children . . . are cold.*"
When the great Dam bursts and the Red River runs,
And the Earthquake smites, and the Forests are a-smoke,
And a hundred leagues of Cannon char earth to a coke,
Hear the wailing of the Beggar in the Galilean cloak—
For the wailing of the Beggar is louder than the guns . . .
As he lifts you a palm and his one song old:
"*My children . . . are hungry . . . my children . . . are cold.*"

It was on Broadway that I saw him last,
Where the roof-signs flare on cornice and mast.

XVI. THIS MIDLAND CITY

*From a series of twenty-six dramatic sketches of observed or imagined situations, to be published under the above title in Paris. Those that follow have already been printed in The Nation, The New Masses, The Golden Gal-
leon, etc.*

Master of Life

A realist he, probing the cosmic stuff
In thunder-bolt or star, acorn or fly,
Viewing our troubled race, as from a bluff,
Sure-footed, staunch of eye.

A realist he, shifting the fates of man
To man's own powers, with earth as revelator:
"For if by *her* laws he foresee and plan,
Man is himself creator."

His class-room was a shrine of hopes and aims
For youth yet graveled by old creed and myth,
With ritual read from Dewey, Bergson, James,
And hymns from Meredith.

His study was an oracle for tears,
First-love, tiffs, pains; a realist, to and fro,
He solved his own endeavors, risks, and fears
By facts and foresight . . . so,

Getting with child (by chance) his sickly bride
(They married late, and married for the soul),
He thumbed imported books (in French), pop-eyed,
For aids to birth-control.

Scholasticus

He rose, smoothed flat his notes, tweaked the desk-light,
Thrust a curt nod at us:
And his assault on Vergil that wild night,
Good friends, was—ominous.

"Anchises' son—poltroon and rake, in short.
Pius?—a sad misnomer!
The author too a flatterer of the court,
And a crude thief (from Homer).

"The pith in Dido's passion (strangely human),
The stress on jewels and flowers,
But proved the poet some voluptuous woman
(Still clever after hours)! . . ."

Well, well. . . . And yet we dropped our jibes with years:
He'd been but pert and green.
He prospered with us (grades, committees, shears,
Syntax, and such routine) . . .

Of late he probed a man who'd lost his wife,
To put his grief to school:
A fool at letters is a fool at life—
But life most feels him fool.

The Professor of Latin

He still taught Latin, though his ivied window
Had lost to red brick walls its elms forever—
Where Checked-Shirts mastered, with Chinese and Hindoo,
Swamp-tiles or cantilever.

He said Lucretius knew the stars and sun,
And Tacitus the state, and Horace men;
And gave to youth what he in youth had won
From Rome and Goettingen.

A dear disciple, watched by each trustee,
A traveler, brisk for Alma Mater's glory
(With Cæsar's force and Tully's master-plea
For the new dormitory),

Became our Prex. He put new bonds in bank;
Screwed up our grading, made clean sports our pride;
And (like Mæcenas) raised the old man's rank . . .
The year before he died.

To Dr. Allen on the Job *

Though corn be mildewed on the cob,
Though editors corrupt the mob,
Though educators lie and rob,
I am not blue—
For thou, O Allen-on-the-job,
Wilt see us through!

O Expert in Efficiency!
Twixt Tweedle-dum and Tweedle-dee
Thou canst distinguish to a T;
By quart and gallon
Thou gaugest cow or Ph.D.,
O Sapient Allen!

Progressives try at playing mystics,
Our senators try pugilistics,
And I, poor ass, try writing distichs—
But Thou, God's Greatest,
Thou Aristotle of Statistics,
Thou tabulatest!

Guard well our Philip, whom from home
Our pride transferred to yonder dome
To make our State another Rome:—
Should aught be lacking,
Be unto him both hair and comb,
And boots and blacking!

* For the academic setting of these verses, the reader is referred to *The Locomotive-God*, p. 337. Allen, after completing the "University Survey," became the right-hand man of the new governor of the state,

Magdalene

She told her pastor, for she lived alone
(The Ladies kept a blue-bronze vase of flowers
In his snug study at the church down-town
To brighten office-hours):

"We're much too poor to marry, Ted and me;
But one week-end—O God! Am I unclean? . . ."
"Tell *all*, my child." . . . She told . . . And (trembling) he
Mentioned the Magdalene.

"I have a daughter, dear: I understand."
And, rising, a rose he clips:
"This for your golden hair." . . . He pressed her hand
And kissed her frightened lips.

Morning Call

Had Frank but bowed ashamed, his head in palms,
Elbows on knees, with eyes upon her rug,
And begged of Lady Monitress the alms
She, with a smile and shrug,

And deft arm on the pillowy divan,
Was tremulous with pleasure to bestow—
The alms of counsel to a sinful man,
The alms of eyes aglow

With gracious faith and bright assurances,
After his manhood's slip had got him down
(Since perilous to live from God it is
In any godly town)—

They still had been good neighbors, still exchanging
Roses for larkspur over the lilac hedge;
Her bow-legged spouse had still with him been ranging
For cress the water's edge . . .

She hates him . . . not because his rebel heart
Brought noise to town and bruise to him and blame;
He spoilt the cue; he balked her darling part . . .
Still standing up, though lame.

XVII. FLIGHT OF CROWS

*My father dies . . . and others come and
go . . . or remain . . . and the calendar years
interpenetrate.*

Flight of Crows [IN MEMORIAM W. J. L. 1837-1920]

I

Out of the chaos of sunset, the one white star and the silence,
Far in the fiery dusk, off at the ends of the world,
Out of the lavender twilight of misty October horizons,
Bursts, like a birth in the skies, swarming the legion of
crows;
Onward and over the valley, and strangely perturbed in their
winging
Bigger and blacker they stream, cawing in answer to caw.
So have I noted in April the wild-geese honking to northward,
Only in loftier air, up in the blue and the day . . .
Morning and night and the seasons, and ever the ancient migra-
tions,
While, for his hour, a man . . . stands on a hill as they
pass.

II

News, like the caw of the crow or the cry of the Canada
flyers,
Startled me walking at noon, naming me one who had
died—
Flashed by the desolate wires that yonder, threading the tree-
tops
Pole unto pole on the moor, under the flight of the crows,
Still are to see, on a silvery strip of the nethermost heavens,
Cutting the splotches of red, crossing from darkness to
dark . . .
News of the earth and the ages, and spelt by the spirit of
lightning:
Bolt from the cloud or the wire—each is an omen to man.

III

Here by the mound of the Eagle, obscure in the yellowing
grasses,

Under an oak that is gone, leaving the acorn for ours,
Once, ere the Saxon invader re-named the ravines and the
ranges,

Bronze hands kindled a blaze, cheery and pungent as mine,—
Pausing I fancy as I, while followed the last of the fledglings

Bat-like hither and yon—suddenly swifter away. . . .
Night and the seasons and cycles, and ever the ancient migra-
tions,

While, for its hour, a fire . . . burns on a hill as they pass.

IV

And as the haze and the gloaming have blotted the roads and
the landmarks,

Yonder and yonder the plain . . . spreads like an alien
world,

Quiet, primeval and vast, as in autumns after the ice-age,

When, from the journeying seeds, blown by the South in
the spring

(Blown to the edge of the desert, the hollows of silt and the
drumlins,

Borne in the toes of a tern, cast in the dung of a deer),
Summer by summer the junipers, sumachs, birches, and berries
Gained on the leagues to the north, bleak with Arcturus and
cold . . .

Season and cycle and æon, and ever the ancient migrations,

Whether a man and his fire . . . linger or not on the hill.

Tutankhamen

Being a king of Egypt, he had found
Egyptian silence in the rock-hewn hill,
Too deep for rain that patters on the ground,
Or shrieking wind that shimmers where it will;

Chambered he slept as far from lightning-shaft
As creak of water-wheel . . . deep, dark, and still . . .
For Egypt, in her stern, huge handicraft,
Had made even Silence an Invincible. . . .
But over Nile a blast of light there broke
From lands upbuilt of Egypt's bones and shrines,
Glinting old seas, unbeaconed then, uncut;
And life's new sounds assailed him, with red smoke
Whirled from the sirens of the mills and mines,
While San Francisco's newsboys cried, "King Tut!"

Estranging Time that bilks us of our best
Now cleaves us from what sanctities we save:
Had he but yesterday been laid to rest,
What prowling hands had dared ransack his grave?
For we that torture life still guard the dead;
Even flowers we spare, and sod is shovel-proof;
Not the fierce Norseman dug his foe from bed,
Unless the grim ghost walked or rode the roof.
But this sarcophagus in Pharaoh's tomb
We now unlid, and show, black, shriveled, taut,
The very face upturned of one to whom
Death had peculiar subtilty for thought—
So long ago his duties, joys, and doom,
The curio's all in all, the man is naught.

So long ago?—Mirror his collarette;
Give your young child his childhood glove to fondle;
Trouble this bowl with rose or violet,
This alabaster bowl of lotus-handle;
Mull, with his ivory cane, by Thames or Po;
Hum to those strings a song of love or flowers:
Ours are his modes and moods of life—although
His hope to conquer death was more than ours.
So long ago?—The bisons, carved by man,
Uncavern a hollow laughter down the gale
From Altamira and from Montespan;

While the shag spectre in Neanderdale,
Towering behind the Magdalenian,
Makes us and Egypt but a single tale.

A tale begun to end. . . . So long ago? . . .
We count from bud to frost, from seed to crop,
Not from the pot-hole on the mountain-top
To stream that scooped it, now so far below.
We calendar vast Time by fall of states
Or birth of gods,—yet from the rocks we bore,
By Gobi's dunes, the eggs of Dinosaur,
The year we found this king behind the gates.
Builders of house and hedge, a race we are
Between the Ice-to-come and Ice forspent,
Who plant a lava-field or ocean-bed;
We coal our engines under many a star
Whose blaze had started down the firmament
Before the boy Tutankhamen was bred.

So earth and starlight bring him, heart and home,
Near as lost faces dreams reveal unbid;
Even though between his roads by pyramid,
Pylon, and sphinx and ours by spire and dome,
Between great Karnak and great aërodrome,
Between his rent Papyrus-of-the-Dead
And all the Liturgies that now be read,
Lies that wide ridge—débris of Greece and Rome.
The skirted, big-eyed Blacks with grip on mace
Stood guard not well. We came, we saw, we took . . .
But nearer than earth can bring him or abyss,
Art, man's one surety over Time and Place,
Will bring him yet. . . . Lay by your hates, and look,
O World, where Beauty is your armistice:

The panel of his coronation throne
Here gleams with glass, faïence, and sheeted gold,
And lapis lazuli, immortal stone;

Showing (by boss and inlay) as of old:
The palace hall, the pillars hung with flowers,
And frieze of royal cobras, while the sun
Through opened ceilings sends the morning hours,
As God of Egypt and of Ikhnaton.
Here sits Tutankhamen in cushioned chair,
His elbow on its back, a palm on knee,
Relaxed from Hunt and Sacrifice and War;
While his unwidowed queen, in hooded hair,
From unguent-cup anoints confidingly
His tawny shoulder with her fingers four.

With Some Chinese Poems

Here are records of man and woman,
Of sun, mountain, sea, and moon,
Of shining rivers and terraced gardens,
From very far away
And mostly from very long ago,
From a people so alien
In skin, profile, gait, raiment,
And in manner of eating and drinking,
Of saluting and bidding farewell,
Of so strange a speech too. . . .
Yet how simple and near are the records,
Like the family-papers of a friend
Across the street.

William Shakespeare

They say that such thy selflessness in giving
Selves to thy creatures and rich everydays,
Thy self escapes us, whilst those selves be living—
They say, and saying do intend thy praise.
Not so. Thou Life—most life, begetting life—
So gav'st thy lineaments to king and clown,

Thy pitch of voice, thy bent at love or strife,
Thy tricks of walking, or of sitting down,
That were some guest who knew thy progeny
Met at the Mermaid with thy band and Ben,
He'd know the corner-chair that compassed thee,
And name the Shakespeare of those merry men,
Even had he never seen thy pictured dust—
The folio's graven brass, the Stratford bust.

Or turn it round: what man of wit and worth,
Practised in hearts and heads, if he should meet
Some of thy offspring (known to all the earth)
Unknown, unsired, upon some Noman's street,
Could not contrive the lineage, could not find
In tragic hero with the poet's eye,
In jester with the analytic mind,
Something for sure to name his father by;
In lover, madman, maiden, something there
Of fancy delicate, or passion free
(Not even in thy next of kin, Molière)
Involved in thy inveterate irony,
Proclaiming more than blazon highest hung
The great progenitor from whence they sprung.

Self is the origin and end of art,
'Tis but the symbol varies: each will tell
His goal of mind, his plenitude of heart,
What might befall him, or before befell.
Some speak the naked words, "I love, I hate";
Some as a lark surmount the setting sun;
Some pour themselves in story or debate;
But lyric, epic, drama, all are one.
And thou art mightier, more manifest
Than all the others, having multiplied
Thyself in thought, in love, in rage, in jest,
In all conditions, more than all beside:
And yet that more of thee is so much more,
We least can measure, where we most adore.

But thy humanity is so much ours,
Such of our little is in thy so-vast,
That love and kinship in essential powers
Give adoration a familiar cast.
There is in Æschylus too much of sky,
Of doom, of thunder, god, and precipice;
Too much of Hell in Dante's awful eye,
Despite its visioning of Beatrice:
But thou, if thou transcend us, still art here;
If prophecy, an earthly prophecy;
A far To-morrow, a To-day how near;
Thy sole self now, but all mankind to-be.
And all the best the world's best artists reach,
We measure by thy stature and thy speech.

Near, but not common. When the times-to-come
Shall breed a race, with eye as quick and wide
To see each shape and hue, and trace it home,
Each motion, whence engendered, how applied;
A race that looks with thy inerrant ken
Each object through, beyond its rags or robes,
And, having worked, will go to work again,
And, having probed the world, forever probes;
A race with memory for all behind,
With hope to all ahead; a race where each
Contains his fellow, mind surrounding mind,
Born to thy incommunicable speech:
Then shalt thou common be, with joys and tears,—
Obscured amid the sanity of peers.

Musing by night on thee, this fancy came:
Suppose the earth were blasted to a rind,
Shent too of waters, winds, and heavenly flame,
It could be clothed and peopled from thy mind:
What hills and woods, and under what a sun!
What streams and seas, and what a fair moon under!
What prodigality of flowers begun,
What winds recruited, what revived thunder!

What birds would sing, and to what maiden vows;
What hounds would hunt, and with what hunter's horn;
What thatched roofs, what towns, what masted prows;
What merchants, rogues, and kings, and dames, re-born!
An earth so furnished, filled with such an host,
The gods would scarce lament the one they lost.

Indeed, 'twere goodlier to deities
Than earth as now; familiars would they meet
On bosky islands, under moony trees,
Spirits of iris wing and fairy feet;
And, finding entertainment from mankind
Less niggard than when now to earth they come,
Finding more dancers in the May-morn wind,
More singing goodmen at the harvest-home,
More awe at bridal, burial, they would then
Revisit oftener than now the streams
And myriad villages of mortal men,
And oft'ner send their services and dreams.
Nor would they mourn such engin'ry of strife
As now most keeps them rearward of our life.

Three centuries 'tis since Ben, thy comrade, swore
Thou wert not of an age but for all time;
New states have risen, old have gone before;
New knowledge come, and poets with new rhyme.
But thou abidest through all change the same,—
Nay, not the same; such thy mysterious growth,
Thy self increaseth with increasing fame,
And three large centuries are increased by both.
Thy heart and head have been communicated
To millions, who were after blent with thee;
Thy voice, in hundred languages translated,
Takes on a blending with the wind and sea.
Thou are so great that thou wilt not despise
This book * we've wrought thee under alien skies.

* The *Sonnets* introduced a volume of *Shakespeare Studies* (1916) by various scholars.

Afterthought

I never knew how cold the midnight river
Down where the great ships sail,
Till on the bridge I saw you run and shiver,
And snatched you from the rail,

A waif, a stranger: and you turned on me
With desperate hurt eyes,
As one who'd robbed you of the ancient sea
Where dead all sorrow lies.

I led you back, and in a near café,
Under stale yellow light,
I heard your story and bewildered stray
Verses of yours that night.

And now though love and song are yours, as never,
With vast white days in store,
I had not known how cold and black the river . . .
And shudder now yet more.

The Visitor

Now that you've told me—me who never asked—
Told me the peril, the memory, and the ache,
And in the telling unwittingly unmasked
What beauty and power within you are awake;
Now that, despite my house with bolt and chain,
At your wild knock, I opened, never knowing,
Until you filled my room, my heart, my brain,
And left me sleepless, sleepless, on your going;
Now that you've woven, however wide you travel,
Your black and gold through all I will or can,
In marvelous patterns I may not unravel,
Without destroying all that makes me man:
Doubly you dare not wantonly un-star
Again in dust the radiant soul you are.

Because I've Learned . . .

Because I've learned, by ball and chain and goad,
 Custom is king upon this sorry isle,
 And builds through town, wood, meadow every road,
 Takes toll at every stile,

And names all feasts and days, my child, I'd spare
 Your groping feet late shipwrecked on our coast,
 Dear delicate feet, yet wounded, worn, and bare . . .
 As one who loves you most.

Chafe not at my strict rede; and keep your life
 Within as bold as when you put to sea:
 Till, strong and wise to flash the rebel knife,
 You do my work for me.

Cytherea

I heard how hungry men had come and fed
 On thy sick body frail,
 Like jackals ravening an orphan dead
 On some unguarded trail,

Between two Syrian cities; and I heard
 How, through each monstrous feast,
 Thy soul was far away as a morning bird,
 That sings to the red east.

And then I too was hungry after thee:
 Hungry to fetch thy body wine and corn,—
 Oh hungry for thy beautiful, bright, free
 Spirit ocean-born.

The Comrade [FOR H. M. K.]

Sunshine flashing on a red-black wing
 By willow, by flower—
 And the little stone bridge is everything.
 (An instant? an hour?)

Echoes wailing off the pine-crag head,
Westward, away—
And earth unbosoms all her ancient dead.
(An hour? a day?)

Northern lights in a March-moon sky,
Over star, over sphere—
And the gods retake the world on high.
(An hour? a year?)

Bird and the sound and the skyey gleam
(We still recall!)—
But a man on foot who shared our dream
Is heart . . . of all.

The Wife [CIVILIAN SHELL-SHOCK]

Ten years you've sat (within the room you wrought)
To guard me from the Fear,
Except for hurried trip (when I was out)
Down town . . . and near, quite near.

Ten years you've sat, except for stolen walk
(With scribbled note on shelf),
By lakeside lane or neighbor's hollyhock,
Anxiously, by yourself.

Ten years together we have hugged our home
Because of this fierce Fear,
And made our prison-close a world to roam,
Counting so dear, so dear

Our swims, our skatings, picnics, we together,
Our phases of the moon,
Getting our changes from the changing weather
From June around to June;

Viewing our lake (from hills behind our door)
With its blue miles of light,

While those far woodlands on the other shore
Turned green . . . then red . . . then white;

Calling a luncheon at a near café
A journey on the train,
Calling a neighboring concert, lecture, play,
A voyage to Greece or Spain;

Reading by lamp of Rome and Gipsy Trail,
Where friends go, two and two
(Whither I'd hoped with bride of mine to sail
While yet this curse was new) . . .

Ten years . . . and you have still such youth and grace,
One born to see and do . . .
While even in Town-and-Gown your woman's place
My Fear withholds from you.

You dream no more (though long the dream was dear)
Of any child at breast,
Playing the mother to a cureless Fear
(Cureless, for all my quest).

Ten years . . . and though I try to think "my wife
In spirit still is free,
And in so cherishing my wretched life,
Works her good works through me,"

Yet gnaws me utterly one grief and shame:
You've paid, because you could,
For a foul wrong to me, before you came,
That broke my hardihood.

Charles Richard Van Hise

[GEOLOGIST, EDUCATOR, RECONSTRUCTIONIST. 1857-1918]

A son of earth, he probed and proved his stock,
Walking with giant footsteps, wise and free;
He searched out wisdom in her cloven rock,
He entered in the springs of ice and sea;

He conned her crystals and her ores of fire
For laws of change, dynamic as the sun;
Then, fraught with surge and scope of her desire,
Foretold the output of her living on.

A son of man, he built with faithful hands
New roads from hills of thought to humble hearts,
Highways to shop and farm and inland beach;
And now, when drifts the war-smoke from all lands,
Touched to still larger issues, he departs—
Even as his lips are moving to new speech.

The Latin Scholar [M. S. S. OBIT ROMÆ 1923]

Friends whose own griefs had borne the heaviest stroke
Best saw into his eyes, but never spoke . . .
Lover of children, pictures, books, and flowers,
Art was for him man's life, man's life an art,
Gracious of step and voice in hall or home . . .
He once brought Vergil to these lakes of ours,
But Vergil, kinsman of his gentle heart,
Took him forever from us back to Rome.

XVIII. AN ÆGYPTIAN PAPYRUS

Some fragments of Sappho of Lesbos, 600 B. C.

I

Deathless Aphrodite, throned in flowers,
Daughter of Zeus, O terrible enchantress,
With this sorrow, with this anguish, break my spirit,
Lady, not longer!

Hear anew the voice! O hear and listen!
Come, as in that island dawn thou camest,
Billowing in thy yokèd car to Sappho
Forth from thy father's

Golden house in pity! . . . I remember:
Fleet and fair thy sparrows drew thee, beating
Fast their wings above the dusky harvests,
Down the pale heavens,

Lighting anon! And thou, O blest and brightest,
Smiling with immortal eyelids asked me:
"Maiden, what betideth thee? Or wherefore
Callest upon me?"

"What is here the longing more than other,
Here in this mad heart? And who the lovely
One belovèd thou wouldst lure to loving?
Sappho, who wrongs thee?"

"See, if now she flies, she soon must follow;
Yes, if spurning gifts, she soon must offer;
Yes, if loving not, she soon must love thee,
Howso unwilling. . . ."

Come again to me! O now! Release me!
End the great pang! And all my heart desireth
Now of fulfillment, fulfill! . . . O Aphrodite,
Fight by my shoulder!

II

Peer of the golden gods is he to Sappho,
He, the happy man who sits beside thee,
Heark'ning so divinely close thy lovely
Speech and dear laughter.

This it was that made to flutter wildly
Heart of mine in bosom panting wildly! . . .
Oh! I need to see thee but a little,
When, as at lightning,

Voice within me stumbles, tongue is broken,
Tingles all my flesh with subtle fire,
Ring my ears with waterfalls and thunders,
Eyes are in midnight,

And a sweat bedews me like a shower,
Tremor hunts my body down and seizes,
Till, as one about to die, I linger
Paler than grass is. . . .

III

Stars, so bright about the moon on Lesbos,
How ye'll hide away your lovely fires,
Soon as at the full she greatly lighteth
Earth with her silver.

IV

Round about me hum the winds of autumn,
Cool between the apple boughs: and slumber,
Flowing from the quivering leaves to earthward,
Spreads as a river.

V

Come, our Aphrodite, queen of Cyprus!
Come, and in the golden goblets serve us
Wine of nectar, delicately watered
Only with joyance!

VI

Girls of mine, who made me great in Lesbos,
Gifting me with works of their own weaving . . .

VII

If heart's desire were toward the good and fair,
If tongue were laboring now no evil speech,
You'd talk before me upright as a tree,
With eyes unshamed as starlight.

VIII

Love, like a mountain-wind upon an oak,
Falling upon me, shakes me leaf and bough.

IX

Off in the twilight hung the low full moon,
And all the women stood before it grave,
As round an altar. Thus at holy times
The Cretan damsels dance melodiously
With delicate feet about the sacrifice,
Trampling the tender bloom of the soft grass.

X

The moon and seven Pleiades have set;
It is the midnight now; the hours go by;
And still I'm lying in my bed alone.

XI

Death shall be death forever unto thee,
Lady, with no remembrance of thy name

Then or thereafter; for thou gatherest not
The roses of Pieria, loving gold
Above the Muses. Even in Hades' House
Wander thou shalt unmarked, flitting forlorn
Among the shadowy, averted dead.

XII

Red and sweet as the apple that glows by itself in the
tree-top,
Out on a twig in the tree-top alone, and forgot by the
pickers—
No, not forgot, as I guess, but out of their reach at the
harvest.

XIII

Fair and frail as the lily the shepherd folk in the moun-
tains
Bruise under foot, as they pass, and it purples the ground
with its flowers.

XIV

Ev'ning, thou bringest whatever the splendor of morning
had scattered:
Sheep and the goat to the pinfold, and home the child
to the mother.

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ERRATA

Page 177, Section x, lines 8 and 9, should read:

Tar on your driveway, rolled in grit,
Makes you a roadbed firm and fit;

Page 193, line 17, should read:

And he lifts you a palm and his one song old:

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ST. OLAF COLLEGE



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